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THE Nation

VOLUME CXLII NEW YORK · WEDNESDAY · JUNE 24, 1936 NUMBER 3703

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The Shape of Things

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MR. ROOSEVELT, DURING HIS TOUR OF THE Southwest, gathered to himself some of the limelight that might otherwise have been shed on Cleveland. In a series of speeches from which, though they were ostensibly historical, his hearers could clearly draw allusions to contemporary problems, he took up the questions of monopolies, labor, conservation, social security, going the Republican platform one better on each of these. Ably skirting the pitfall of the too specific, he concentrated on the past. He managed, however, when talking in Arkansas about the Louisiana Purchase, to allude to the fact that it was made "without the unanimous approval of every member of the legal profession" and that no one took the case to the Supreme Court. And while complimenting Texas on its pioneering legislation for trust-busting, he brought in references to the present-day monopolies and vested interests. Nor was he afraid to tackle the question of the hour—the right of Congress to legislate for the national welfare. Despite the President's curious circumlocutory technique, reminiscent of the eighteenth-century poets who would not call a fish a fish but a "finny denizen of the deep," we venture the interpretation that he is against a constitutional amendment but is willing to take his stand on the necessity and validity of federal regulation on problems of national concern. "Unless the action of states is substantially uniform and simultaneous," he said, "the effectiveness of reform is nullified." Since such action can hardly be expected, we deduce that the President believes federal regulation to be necessary. But whether this is to be accomplished by the appointment of new judges or by more drastic measures is left unclear. Here is a plank for the Democrats to hew away at.

*

THE SEASON OF HARD-WON DEGREES AND free advice is once more upon us. Commencement orators are lucky; no matter how much platitudinous nonsense they talk, their audiences cannot walk out on them. This year the Commencement Day addresses and baccalaureate sermons used this rare advantage to the limit. There was the usual talk about the ideal of service, the need of religion, the menace of radical teachings, and so on. There was also, we are gratified to note, recognition here and there—as in Dr. Angell's baccalaureate address at Yale—of the menace of economic and political reaction. At New York University, Dr. Fred I. Kent called "that great political slogan, 'social security,' " destructive to employment,

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while Secretary Perkins told the graduates of Alfred University that "the greatest opportunity of youth" lay in "the development of a social technique for security." You pays your money and you takes your choice. If we were among this year's graduates, we should plump for social security. It may be true, as Dr. Ernest Martin Hopkins declared at Dartmouth, that the opportunities of our forbears were "few in number and inconsiderable in importance as compared with those which today lie close at hand for all of us"; but our forbears were also few in number as compared with all of us, competition was not so keen, and holding companies did not exist. If we were called upon to advise the current crop of bachelors, we should exhort them to take stock of the world as it is, not as speakers say it is. And we should probably close with a peroration about rolling up their sleeves and setting out to make this land once more a land of opportunity.

*

PREMIER LEON BLUM ENTERS HIS SECOND fortnight of responsibility with many of his most pressing problems behind him. The epidemic of strikes which threatened for a time to embarrass his first days in office has been settled in such a way as to contribute greatly to his prestige. At least a million French workers, suffering from years of hardship as the result of the deflationary policies of previous governments, have obtained increased wages, reduced hours, and vacations on pay. The government bills providing for a compulsory forty-hour week and two-week vacations on pay, restoring pay cuts to government employees, and guaranteeing the right of collective bargaining were pushed through the Chamber with no more than seven dissenting votes. But the government's economic troubles are not ended. In opposing devaluation of the franc M. Blum has taken the position that the rise in working-class buying power through increased wages will stimulate lagging economic activity. Actually there is little chance that this will occur. Increased wages, shortened hours, and vacations on pay cannot but increase the costs of French producers, which are already high in comparison with foreign competitors because France has seen fit to cling to the gold standard in the face of almost universal devaluation. As a result there is danger of economic stagnation unless the government takes immediate steps to devalue the franc. With the gold flow as yet unabated it is probable that at best devaluation can be staved off only a few months. The question is whether M. Blum will act quickly enough to benefit from this inevitable step.

*

THE LANDING OF JAPANESE TROOPS AT AMOY may be the decisive factor in transforming China's threatened civil war into united resistance against Japan. While recent developments have indicated that the two Kwangsi leaders, Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi, have been motivated more by personal antagonism against Chiang Kai-shek—because of the diversion of their former opium revenues—than any desire to fight Japan, the anti-Japanese movement appears to be assuming mass proportions. Not since 1927 has China seen anything comparable to the great popular demonstration staged at Canton on June 13. Under the tolerance of the local authorities hundreds of thousands of Cantonese—peasants, industrial workers, students, and coolies—participated in a gigantic anti-Japanese parade, shouting for war against their country's foe. At Peiping five thousand students attempted a similar demonstration, but were dispersed after a sanguinary struggle with the police, although the latter informed the students that they too were "anti-Japanese." Frightened by the possible popular reaction in case of a civil war, General Chen Chi-tang, leader of the Cantonese forces, has withdrawn his troops from Hunan and addressed a further appeal to Chiang Kai-shek to "name the route by which the Cantonese may advance against Japan." While it is evident that Chiang is not yet prepared to run the risk of a conflict with Japan, it is not impossible that he will be driven to war by pressure from below. Nor would China be as helpless in such a struggle as is generally believed. Japan would have every advantage as far as munitions and equipment are concerned, but might find itself as vulnerable in the face of a nation-wide strike as were the British when South China employed the same methods against Hongkong in 1925-26.

*

IN REMINGTON-RAND PRESS RELEASES THE strike of 4,000 workers in the company's plants in six cities has been settled almost daily. Back of this rather misleading publicity is a story of attempted intimidation and steady refusal to confer with strikers or to accept mediation by governmental agencies. The strikers, who walked out a month ago when sixteen workers were discharged following a move for higher wages, are demanding a 20 per cent wage increase, recognition of the union, a $15 bonus, and the reinstatement of striking workers. The company, instead of discussing these demands, has repeatedly threatened to close the plants if the strikers do not return to work, and now it announces that the plants of Middletown (Connecticut), Syracuse (New York), and Norwood (Ohio) will be definitely abandoned. The manager of the Ohio plant is reported as having said that in the announcement concerning it the words "part of" were "unintentionally omitted," and that only one-third of the plant will be moved elsewhere. It looks as if the taxpayers would pay dearly for the company's intransigence, for there is no doubt that hundreds of its discarded workers, with their families, will soon be on the relief rolls. According to the company's latest report, its net profit for the last fiscal year was $3,010,288, an increase of 72 per cent over the previous year's showing.

*

THE WEEK, AN ENGLISH BULLETIN WHOSE reliability is ordinarily beyond question, gives over most of its June 4 issue to a report of the activities of William Bullitt, Ambassador from the United States to the Soviet Union, which should be of serious concern to every American. Mr. Bullitt is charged with having used his influence, unofficially of course, to win certain British leaders to the support of the foreign policy of the present German gov-

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ernment. He is said to have urged acceptance of Nazi aims, partly on the ground that they are a "bulwark against Bolshevism," and partly because a conciliatory attitude might postpone a German attack in the West. Mr. Bullitt is also reported to have warned his British friends that a red revolution in France and Spain is not far distant, and to have besought them to prevent the appointment of M. Yvon Delbos as Foreign Minister of France, because he feared that the latter's influence would go toward the strengthening of the Franco-Soviet pact. Despite the usually uncanny accuracy of *The Week's* "inside" information, we find it extremely difficult to believe that an American ambassador, wittingly or unwittingly, could allow himself thus to be drawn into the European political maelstrom. That "Bill" Bullitt, long regarded as a sincere friend of the Soviet Union, should permit himself to be used by the Soviet's bitterest enemy is even more incredible. But in view of the seriousness of the charge and the reputation of the agency advancing it, we should expect more than a routine denial of the allegation. The situation warrants thorough investigation by the highest authorities of the State Department and drastic action if the charges prove to be substantially correct.

*

THE STAMPEDE OF THE WASHINGTON STATE Democratic Convention to a production-for-use platform stands without parallel in the current political campaign. Three years ago various left-wing groups in Seattle and Tacoma, including labor unions, organizations for the unemployed, and technocratic clubs, were amalgamated into what later became known as the Washington Commonwealth Federation. These groups played an important role in electing Schwellenbach to the Senate in 1934 on an EPIW (End Poverty in Washington) platform. In early May of this year, when the state's precinct and district caucuses were called, leaders of the Commonwealth Federation were discussing the possibility of a third party in the fall election. But meanwhile they had been carrying on an effective campaign among the rank and file of the Democratic Party. Under the leadership of Howard G. Costigan, thirty-two-year-old executive director of the federation, the left-wing groups swept one after another of the county conventions. After a bitter struggle the state convention adopted the federation program almost *in toto,* though it is considerably to the left of the platform which Upton Sinclair forced on the Democrats of California in 1934. It is somewhat startling to find a Democratic state convention going on record for "public ownership of natural resources, muntion plants, and public utilities . . . federal ownership and operation of national banks" and asserting that the need for some plan of production for use "is urgent, pressing, and vital." The Commonwealth Federation is also urging the adoption of initiative measure 119, which would permit the state to organize its unused productive forces in the interest of the entire population. The immediate drive for control of the state may fail in the face of a threatened coalition of the reactionary forces, but production for use appears to have come to stay as the major political issue in the Columbia River basin.

All Dressed Up . . .

THERE can be no doubt that a real coup has taken place in the Republican Party. It does not represent a genuine shift toward liberalism or a new alignment of forces within the ranks. What has happened is that one political gang within the party has turned out the other. Led by Governor Landon and John Hamilton, the Kansas group has effected a palace revolution. The new group is younger and more vigorous than the Old Guard. And is ready to put on a real show. No one will question that. Mr. Roosevelt will need all his own adroitness and all the strategic resources of Jim Farley, Charlie Michaelson, and their cohorts to meet the attack. The Democrats are no longer confronted by an enemy which will make all the stupid blunders that the Republican Old Guard could always be counted on to make. These new Republican boys are a bunch of hard-boiled newspapermen, shrewd tacticians, aggressive go-getters. Their build-up of Mr. Landon before the convention and their masterly tactics in pulling the convention puppet-strings are only a beginning. More will be heard from them. They have a heart-breaking job on their hands, but they have the crusading zeal that is based upon the most powerful of impulsions—the determination of an office-hungry group to get the political gravy for themselves. Landon has shrewdness, Knox and Roberts know the newspaper ropes, Hamilton has infinite self-confidence and a brash sort of drive. It is clear that the Republican Party is all dressed up.

No Place to Go. But it is equally clear that it has no place to go. All the talk of progressivism is sheer bunk. The Hearst visit to Topeka and the placing of the official imprimatur upon the Kansas governor represented an amazing flaw in otherwise skilful strategy. The selection as the vice-presidential candidate of a man whose opinions and moral fiber were formed as one of the most ruthless of the Hearst executives is another amazingly unstrategic move and another proof of the Hearst tie-up.

As for leadership, the one impressive fact is that even Herbert Hoover loomed like a giant in the convention of pigmies. Brobdingnag Hoover got up and made a speech in the assemblage of Lilliputian puppets, and the country almost forgot that he was only old Lemuel Gulliver. It is true that much of the ovation he got was synthetic, and the rest of it was due to the fact that the delegates had been so completely shelved that when they finally got a chance to stretch their legs and their voices at the only dramatic moment offered by the convention, they surprised themselves and Mr. Hoover by their enthusiasm. But this only gives an indication of the Republican stature. Landon has maneuvered himself into the nomination by his felicitous gift for vagueness: the logic of his position will compel him to cultivate that gift further. For despite the choice of candidates by acclamation the Republican Party has no inner unity and cohesion. It has been whipped and demoralized by failing to meet the emergency of the crisis when it was in power and to

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act as an effective opposition when it was out of power. Its new sources of strength do not lie in any genuine accessions of popular feeling. It is a broken party, trying to cover up its disunity by a factitious agreement upon an unknown leader and a discredited platform.

The Platform. It is fundamentally misleading to think of the Republican Party merely as the representatives of intrenched capitalism. Outside the rank and file of the party's supporters—white-collar and manual workers, small shopkeepers, and professional men and women—whose interests are almost completely ignored in the platform, the articulate elements in the party are divided into three main factions. First, there are the true tories—bankers, academic economists, and conservatives of the old school—who are passionately committed to the doctrines of laissez faire. This group desires above all else a return to the gold standard, stabilization of world currencies, a balanced budget, the removal of all restrictions on trade, and would like to see a complete abandonment of agricultural subsidies. Though influential in proportion to its members, this faction plays no decisive role in the party.

In agreement with the old school on many points but fundamentally opposed to laissez faire stand the representatives of the Eastern industrial oligarchy which has dominated the Republican Party for the last fifty years. While theoretically in favor of a restoration of the gold standard, this clique may be counted on to fight to the last ditch against such changes in American commercial policy as are necessary to the reestablishment of an international monetary system. Set apart from both these groups by fundamental economic interests are the agrarian Republicans of the West. Although opposed to the high-tariff demands of the Eastern industrialists, they are against laissez faire where it affects agriculture. In monetary policy they tend to be either pro-silver or inflationist, and they are strongly in favor of production control and subsidies for farm products.

Torn between these conflicting opinions, the Republicans have confined themselves largely to violent denunciation of Democratic policies and offer little that is positive. It is scarcely illuminating, for example, to find that they are in favor of a "sound and stable currency" and are opposed to further devaluation of the dollar. The Democrats, the Socialists, and even the Communists might well have identical planks in their platforms. Governor Landon interprets the plank as providing for an eventual return to gold, but as it stands it could apply equally well to a managed currency, a "commodity dollar," the old gold standard, a silver standard, or bimetallism.

On a few points it is evident that the Republicans have learned a great deal from four years of wandering in the wilderness. Unlike the 1932 platform, which contained no mention of monopolies, the regulation of the security markets, the right of collective bargaining, child labor, or civil-service reform, the present platform contains fragmentary statements on all these points. Similarly, it is encouraging to see the G. O. P. coming out emphatically—in contrast to its silence on the subject in 1932—for old-age and unemployment insurance, though it would leave the burden primarily on the states. Moreover, it is in advance of the Democratic Party in insisting that the revenues for social insurance should be derived from general taxation, although its qualifying phrase, a "direct tax widely distributed," sounds suspiciously like advocacy of a sales tax.

The plank on foreign affairs is perhaps the most disappointing of all and represents a distinct retreat from the 1932 platform. In opposing America's entry into the World Court the party follows Hearst's leadership as against the specific recommendations of three Republican Presidents, while its blanket rejection of the League is utterly incompatible with the pride with which it previously detailed the instances in which Republican Administrations had found it advisable to cooperate with Geneva. No mention is made of the three primary issues of present-day foreign policy—neutrality, collective security, and nationalization of the arms trade.

A few sections of the platform are frankly and undeniably reactionary. Perhaps the most vicious is the proposal to return the responsibility for relief to the states, and to make federal aid conditional upon the assumption of "a fair proportion of the total relief burden" by the states and local governments. For many parts of the country, particularly the South and Middle West, this amounts to throwing the unemployed into the streets to starve. Equally indefensible, though somewhat confused, is the party's stand on the tariff. It comes out unqualifiedly for the repeal of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act and advocates "sufficient protection to defend the American farmer and wage-earner," but at the same time pledges itself "to furnish government assistance in disposing of surpluses in foreign trade by bargaining for foreign markets," and to adjust tariffs with a view to promoting international trade. If this means anything at all, and the phraseology has purposely been made confusing, it suggests the Peek plan of rigorous regimentation of trade and the bludgeoning down of the trade defenses of weaker countries by superior economic force. It is scarcely a program for restoring international economic stability. The platform's phrases about balancing the budget through the immediate curtailment of federal expenditures also have an ominous ring. It is unthinkable that any Administration would actually reduce emergency expenditures to this extent, but if carried out such a measure might easily provoke a reaction which would drive the United States back to the dark days of the depression. The elimination of federal relief, the dismissal of thousands of federal employees, the raising of the cost of living through an increase of tariffs, the abandonment of federal unemployment and old-age insurance are a fitting platform for the party responsible for the great crisis, but hardly one upon which to win a Presidential election.

Fishbait for the Farm Vote. Since the main Republican hope lies in an invasion of the farm area, the farm plank is particularly important. In its main features it pirates the policy of the New Deal, but with qualifications designed to insure ineffectiveness. Instead of benefits based on limitation of production, the Republicans promise benefits based on domestically consumed portions of the crop "to make the tariff effective." The allocation of

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the domestically consumed portions of the crop to the individual farmer, and the division between landlord and tenant would involve difficulties of administration even greater than those encountered by the AAA. The amount of subsidy, if it were really to make the tariff effective, would exceed a billion dollars. A party pledged to balancing the budget, and in fact controlled by the financiers, cannot keep any such promise. It is merely bait for the farm vote, which has in the past taken the Republican hook even without bait.

The Roosevelt policy of retiring marginal land is accepted but with the provision that the acquisition of such land must be with the approval of the legislative and executive branches of the states concerned. This means that for a project like the Tennessee Valley involving several states, the governor or the legislature of any one state, or the interests controlling such a state, could hold up the project. In every case federal action would wait upon state legislation, with all the delays inherent in such a division of authority. The farmer is promised increased protection against the importation of farm products. This is a revival of the old hocus-pocus that protection can help an export industry. The farmer is promised government assistance in securing foreign markets, which cannot be secured without the reciprocal concessions the Republicans are pledged not to make. He is promised cheap farm credit when and if the party finds the money to lend it. He will be subsidized for his cooperation in striking a balance between soil-building and soil-depleting crops if this can be done consistently with a balanced budget—as it cannot be.

All benefits, if there are any, are to be confined to the family-type farm. The Chamber of Commerce farmers, like Tom Campbell, are to be thrown to the wolves. When in danger a capitalistic crowd always makes a generous gesture like this.

The Real Platform. Of course the real Republican platform was never formally adopted or published. The real platform is hatred of Mr. Roosevelt. It came out in Senator Steiwer's incredibly malignant speech and in Mr. Hoover's hysterical oratory. There is little chance of the Republicans winning, but if they should ever win we should have the spectacle of a gang held together by greed and hate, with not the slightest evidence that they have enough social intelligence to guide this greed and hate to anything like even the rational order of their own interests. What they would do would be to carry the country a long way farther toward the kind of social disaster which Mr. Hoover so successfully inaugurated. The striking thing about both the Republican convention and the Republican platform is their amazing moral bankruptcy. Not one breath of idealism has been allowed to filter through the entire striving for power. There is no indication that the group in control cares anything about the things that move the common man today in America—the desire for increased bargaining power in the hands of the workers, the intense desire of every plain American for neutrality and peace, the growing recognition that we form a national economic pattern and that we cannot go back to the extreme states' rights that characterized the Articles of Confederation. Even the group of hard-boiled go-getters who form the clique which now controls the party will not be able to swing a campaign on such a dearth of social and moral intelligence.

Homekeeping Hearts

THERE is a hoary superstition, kept alive by a whole army of sentimentalists, that housekeeping makes the whole world of women kin. This supposed kinship was stressed pretty heavily in the plentiful publicity which the press gave the Congress of Associated Country Women of the World, lately assembled in our national capital. The reporters made much copy of "titled women who supervise their own farms" sitting "elbow to elbow" with those who actually till the soil, "absorbed in each other's experiences and problems." It was as if Owen D. Young had been caught rubbing elbows with a Third Avenue vendor of radio sets, both absorbed in their common interest.

The A.C.W.W.'s official pamphlets reveal that its honorary president is Ishbel, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, president of the International Council of Women; that its president is Mrs. Alfred Watt, holder of the Order of the British Empire for war services; and that other officials are Lady Tiphaine Lucas of France, Lady Eleanor Cole of East Africa, and Baroness Schröder and Countess Keyserling of Germany. These horny-handed tillers of the soil are officers of an organization which, if the assembled delegates in Washington were representative, is made up pretty exclusively of middle-class and upper-class countrywomen. The foreign delegates, except for the Germans and Latvians, whose expenses were paid by their governments, were obliged to foot their own bills; and perhaps this partly accounts for the conspicuous absence of working countrywomen from their numbers. Herr Hitler, who could have sent some women workers, was evidently more concerned with furnishing able Nazi propagandists to an international movement so closely akin to his own fantastic *Kirche-Küche-Kinder* policy that it would be greatly to his advantage to capture its control. His delegates were Frau Reith, appointed leader of peasant women in South Germany, and Frau Küssner-Gerhardt, adviser to the Minister of Agriculture. Baroness Schröder participated as an unofficial German delegate. The American delegates, we have it from a reliable and attentive observer, were mostly wives of the landed gentry.

And what were the problems that occupied the conference? The labor problem was one. Among the American delegates there was considerable complaining about demands for higher wages from their "hired help" or "niggers." Frau Reith's description of the "most successful" Nazi method of assuring cheap domestic labor aroused much enthusiasm—this method consists, it will be remembered, in placing girls as apprentices in private families, where they work fifteen hours a day for wages ranging from nothing to $10 a month. Baroness Schröder's description of the government labor camps where girls are trained for domestic and agricultural service also aroused

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much interest. A South Carolina delegate commented, "We just can't get girls to work as apprentices for low wages, and niggers are expensive too." And another delegate remarked, "I wish we had some scheme like the German where girls *got into their own line of business.*" The sisterhood of homekeeping hearts melted away before the desire for an inexhaustible supply of cheap labor.

They were interested in peace, but merely as an ideal, said Mrs. E. M. Orr, English delegate—"something we feel we will achieve by desiring it." Mrs. Orr felt that Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt "overstepped in talking about peace so strongly." According to Miss Grace Frysinger of the United States Department of Agriculture, it is the purpose of the association "to concentrate on the fundamental things women can do." And the conference left a strong impression that in the association's opinion the most fundamental thing women can do is to withdraw from industry and the professions and converge on the home. "We in England feel," said Mrs. Orr, "that men should have the jobs so many young women now have." Frau Reith assured the delegates that "all the girls in Germany are happier in their homes." She discreetly refrained from mentioning the announced increase of 28 per cent in the German divorce rate in 1934.

Here is a fine reactionary way of concealing the true extent of unemployment. If women can be removed from industry and the professions, the employment of men will mount and the indices of unemployment will fall, as women are classed as unemployable. And with only domestic employment open to women, those fortunate enough to have homes and incomes will be assured of finding plenty of cheap "hired help" among those who have neither. There is no Russian representation in the A.C.W.W. It would never do to advertise that a socialized state offers a wide range of opportunity to women workers. To a declining capitalism women in gainful employment now mean an embarrassing official percentage of unemployment and a corresponding large expenditure for relief. But so-called democratic governments could hardly attempt to force women back into the narrow sphere of exclusive domesticity. Better depend upon persuasion by interested women. "If you must have an issue," said the late Calvin Coolidge to the late Dwight Morrow, "talk about the home. Everyone's for it."

No Peonage

NO LAW of our country makes the share-cropper a slave. But, as we have learned in the past year, law, when it meets hard domestic fact, can turn its face the other way. As the strike of the Arkansas share-croppers continues with desperate steadfastness day after day and slowly gains more notice in the press, we are becoming aware that in a section of our country slave labor still prevails. To get any work at all, the share-croppers have been forced to accept yellow-dog contracts at wages of 75 cents for a ten-hour day, and even this they owe in advance for rent, food, and clothing; so that many of them never handle a coin from one end of the year to the other. Starved into the last ditch, the cotton workers could retreat no farther. They began to climb out. They organized. Negroes and whites together forgot the urge to hate in the urge to live and joined to form the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. The planters tried to shatter it by instituting a system of terror by eviction. In answer the union called the present strike, in which six thousand workers are demanding a wage increase to $1.50 a day.

Planters, police, sheriffs, and judges are concentrating their efforts on breaking the strike. State rangers are driving the workers back to the cotton fields at the point of a gun. The National Guard has dragged machine-guns into the village streets, and although there has been no shooting, has forced picket lines to disband by intimidation. Harassed by threats to "leave or be lynched," many of the workers have crossed the state line to seek refuge in Tennessee. But the terror they fled from was there to meet them. In Memphis last week a judge sentenced five cotton choppers from Arkansas, arrested in a police raid, to a fine of $50 each in order "to set an example of the men and prevent agitation." At the same time a picket line of refugees was charged by the police and one of the pickets killed. Meanwhile in Arkansas the cooperation of law and private property has forged a savagely effective weapon against the strikers. The law brings about the arrest of the strikers on charges of vagrancy, sentences them to fines instead of imprisonment, and then makes them work out the fines by picking cotton on the private plantations. In one town a man named Beachers ordered the arrests in his official capacity as chief of police, and then in his private capacity as plantation owner contracted with himself to put the prisoners to work in his own fields. In this situation the special assistant district attorney sent down by the Department of Justice to investigate violations of the federal peonage, or "forced-labor," law was helpless. For while the state of Arkansas has abolished private contracting for prison labor, several counties allow it. Thus, when Governor Futrell of Arkansas promised Whitaker, the Department of Justice man, to remedy whatever illegal conditions the investigation should disclose, he knew he was quite safe since Whitaker would have to report, as he did, a finding of "no peonage."

What makes the situation so grim a deadlock is the fact that the planters are in their way as desperate as the laborers. It is true that in cotton the margin of profits is so thin that higher wages might narrow it down to nothing. Cotton is the sick man of the South. It may have been king once, but like all kings who feel their power slipping it has become a tyrant, and this accounts for the brutality which has marked the planters' efforts to break the strike. Even in the unlikely event that the share-croppers should win their extra 75 cents a day, that would be but a temporary solution. The roots of the problem go deeper than the question of wages and hours; they reach down to the fundamental cause—the bankruptcy of Southern agriculture. Unless a program of diversification of crops and the breaking up of large-scale, single-crop holdings into individual farms is adopted—and the federal government allowed to put it into practice—no stop-gap remedy will save the share-croppers.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Hopson's Choice

Washington, June 14

HAVE you been buoyed up of late by an impression that the Black committee's exposures have broken the power trust's grip on Congress? Then prepare for a sinking spell. Evidence just come to light here shows that the power lobby still operates in Congressional antechambers. In fact, its latest sortie, led by the Hopson gang, surpasses in desperateness any that has preceded, for it is one whose purposes cannot be masked. Neither can the fact that two Administration Senators—Van Nuys of Indiana and O'Mahoney of Wyoming—cleared the way for the buccaneers.

The story begins back in 1935 when the late Representative Perkins, a New Jersey Republican, introduced an amendment to Section 77-b of the Bankruptcy Act. Under Section 77-b as it stood any three creditors of a company, provided they had claims amounting to at least $1,000, could go into federal court and file a petition for that company's reorganization. Under the Perkins amendment it would be necessary for those petitioners to hold at least 5 per cent of the outstanding debt claims against the company. Aimed ostensibly at prevention of "strike suits"—that is, at protecting big shysters from the forays of little shysters—the amendment looked innocent enough, and it was passed by the House. Sent to the Senate, it was referred to the Judiciary Committee and thence to a subcommittee composed of Van Nuys, O'Mahoney, and Hastings of Delaware.

When Van Nuys, O'Mahoney, and the inconsequential Hastings had finished with the bill, it had undergone further amendment. They not only took the Perkins proposal to their breasts but made it retroactive and applicable to all suits pending under Section 77-b. Then they slipped the bill through the full committee and on to the Senate floor, where it was adopted without debate and passed back to the House for concurrence in the Senate amendments. It was all done so quietly that the bill was on the verge of routine enactment into law before a few gentlemen of good faith awoke to the situation and threw a wrench into the machinery. Incidentally, the best hurler was a gentleman in the Senate who is damned week in and week out by liberals and radicals as a black-blooded reactionary and champion of the vested interests. An appeal to his sense of fair play was all that was needed to get him to jam the legislative machinery at once and bring about the bill's hasty recall to the Senate, which promptly sent the measure back to the Judiciary Committee.

In the hearings that followed, the true significance of the amendments and the identity of the forces behind them were spread upon the public records by William O. Douglas of the SEC, C. M. Hester, the Treasury's assistant general counsel, Frank J. Wideman, until recently an assistant attorney general in charge of tax cases, and last but not least one Tom McKeown, a former Congressman from Oklahoma. Their combined testimony offered unmistakable evidence that the amendments were the work of the Associated Gas and Electric Company's lobby and were directed solely at keeping the Hopson empire from being brought down in a heap by a reorganization proceeding instituted under Section 77-b at New York two years ago by holders of $750,000 worth of A. G. and E. securities. McKeown, in fact, owned up to having been the author of the amendments, and he is a self-confessed lobbyist for the company. McKeown—who drew Van Nuys and O'Mahoney into his own coterie by saying to them, "We had difficulty as you may remember in trying to write out the proper thing"—also owned up to having had knowledge that his amendments would wipe out the case against the company in New York, but he asked the Senate to believe that he was acting at the time merely as a public-spirited individual. He said he was employed by Associated before and after he wrote the amendments but not while he was selling them to the committee. There are indications, some of which are matters of record, that in his selling feat he had the help of such respected gentlemen as Bruce Kremer, Basil O'Connor, Pat Hurley, Jim Watson, Nathan Miller, and Joseph Proskauer.

Had McKeown's trick succeeded, it would have done more than merely wipe out the New York suit which the Hopson gang has kept in suspension to date by a series of legal stalemates that have cost the petitioners thousands and the company more than a million dollars. According to Hester, it would seriously have impeded the government's $50,000,000 tax judgment against the Associated, which is scheduled for adjudication along with the 77-b case. The potential general effect of the McKeown amendments was illustrated by Douglas of the SEC. "What the result will be is clear," he said. "It will mean that all the vices of the old friendly or consent receivership will reappear with little check on them. The insiders can proceed at their own leisure to set the stage for a reorganization of their own liking and to move quickly and with dispatch toward a consummation of the plan which will give them the greatest degree of protection."

Will the committee heed his warning? At last report it was busily engaged in changing the wording but not the effect of the McKeown amendments and in adding a new one which would enable Associated to slide out from under the New York case, if greased ways proposed by McKeown failed. However, there is little likelihood that these proposals will get by the Senate. Senator Norris is now lying in wait for them.

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THE ELEPHANT GOES WEST

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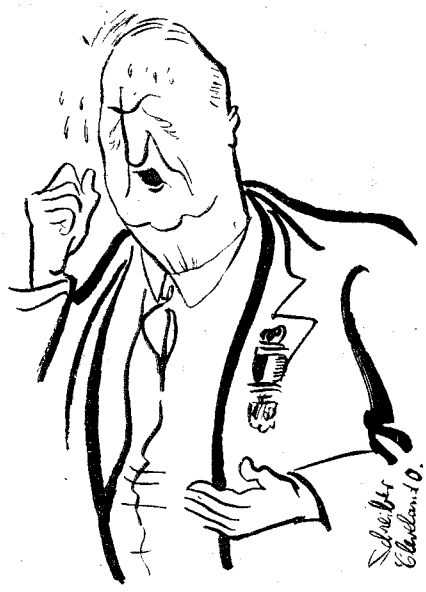
The Elephant Packs His Trunk

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

Cleveland, June 12

THAT is what has happened here—and nothing else. The Republican elephant has been taken over by the Kansas crowd, not without the usual compromising and shifting, of course. But because they were the only ones who had a possible candidate to offer from the right geographical section and had successfully concealed his real opinions from everybody, and because their candidate has been too inconspicuous to make any enemies, the men who put Landon over have annexed the elephant. He has packed his trunk and his other belongings in the hope that he now has a chance of saving them from a bankruptcy sale, and after four lean years is heading for the drought- and dust-stricken area of the Middle West. Will his trek across the prairies lead him to Green Pastures fresh? Will he ever come back? Will his new masters exploit him to the full, or will they be compelled to make terms with his late owners, the Old Guard, to get the wherewithal to carry on their political show business?



Snell as Permanent Chairman

These are the questions the party now faces after the usual asinine performance which in America is termed a "national party convention." No one can answer them because no man knows whether the new owners realize how great an opportunity is theirs, or what use they propose to make of their sudden power. No one can guess as yet whether the Governor of Kansas will lead or be led; whether or not John Hamilton, Henry J. Allen, Bill White, and Roy Roberts will seek to give a 1912 Bull Moose slant to the campaign without regard to the feelings of Wall Street and the wealthy backers of the party who control its purse. It is an unparalleled situation in many ways. Not since the days of Grant has the party nominated a man by acclamation. This time it is not a national hero to whom this honor has gone but a mystery man with whom not only the country but the present leaders of his own party will have to become acquainted as the campaign develops. It is to be the Unknown Battler, wearing a mask until now, against the Known Champion of the ring. One of the few remaining Old Guard leaders admitted yesterday that he had never met Landon and had not the faintest idea what his real views were, or whether the Governor might not surprise him and his pals by turning out sufficiently progressive to send cold chills down the backs of the business men who are most opposed to the New Deal. They did not like that telegram from Topeka at all.

There are, of course, those who think that the tactics of the Old Guard in making little effort to fight the Kansans are very shrewd, that these men feel in their hearts that Roosevelt will win, and that therefore it will be just as well to let the other fellows bear the stigma of defeat. In that case they would expect to be the heirs of the Kansans and bring the elephant back to his old Wall Street quarters, give him plenty of hay, and train him for another race in 1940 with a mahout of their choosing on his back. When it comes to getting the campaign funds, they are probably arguing, the new managers will have to come to them and that will be the time to make terms. Perhaps so. Perhaps they are reckoning without their Hamilton. For that young man is an aggressive go-getter, and Mr. Landon has been a gambler in the oil business who has dared and won. And what is to keep this Kansan from making an acceptance speech that will go half or more of the distance of the New Deal? They cannot feel wholly encouraged by the result of the platform fight. They carefully packed the subcommittee on resolutions with some of their choicest spirits —Dave Reed, Hiram Bingham, George Moses, and Walter Edge, ex-Senators all. The member from New York, Representative Taber, had obviously not had a new idea in forty years. The chairman, Congressman Herman Langworthy, although a Landon man, ranks as anything but a progressive, and so does J. Reuben Clark of Utah, who played a big role in the day-and-night sessions of the subcommittee. Still the Old Guard did not get what it wanted. In many of its planks the platform accepts the philosophy and teachings of the New Deal. The Landon forces kept in touch with the Governor, and when they lost points it was because of political ineptness or their yielding to Borah. But in the main they got pretty much what Governor Landon wanted. It is a safe bet that the Old Guard will not write the speeches for Landon, and if ever I saw a disgruntled group of men it was Fletcher, Hilles, Wadsworth, and Bingham in a group by themselves at the Hotel Cleveland early this morning.

But what will happen with Landon? Is he in a position to cut loose from Hearst? Is it his idea to make over the party, give it a national headquarters in Chicago, call young men to the key positions, and generally build up a liberal, grass-roots party, free from all taint of Wall Street? If he and his Kansas associates have this in mind, we may be witnessing the beginning of a real political revolution.

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But here again no man knows. The California-Hearst episode and Landon's reception in Topeka of Hearst himself have put the Governor under a suspicion that he must live down promptly, especially as his running mate, Colonel Knox, was for years the willing tool of Hearst, whom he served as general manager of his newspaper properties—which by itself ought to disqualify him.

It is a fact that many of the delegates who voted for Landon have marked doubts as to his fitness for the Presidency. Let no one be deceived by the press reports of a united and happy Republican front as a result of the convention. There was acceptance of the accomplished fact, and resignation, and belief that the best of an exceedingly poor string of candidates had been picked. But real enthusiasm there was not, outside of the Kansas crowd. No intelligent and honest person would assert that he had witnessed any great occasion or that a real crusade to save the Republic is under way. Governor Landon may rise to his opportunity and prove himself something else, but the belief is that he has so far been only a pleasant politician of the ordinary type. It is known that two of the other candidates are anything but enthusiastic over Landon. Can he now convince the people that he is of the caliber for the greatest American job in the worst crisis in our history?

As for the convention, all the childish features of these occasions have been in evidence—the blaring bands, shriller and louder than ever, the driveling campaign songs, the Negro singers, the shrieking soloists, the presentation of the oldest living Presidential widow, incredibly bad speeches, fortunately far fewer than usual, and cattle-like herding of the delegates, who were more like ventriloquists' dummies than ever before, if that be possible. It is not surprising that one of the Russian journalists, from Stalin's kept press, expressed his amazement yesterday at the total absence of any democracy in the proceedings. "Why," he said, "when our Soviets meet, every delegate has the right to be heard, and here not one was. We debate all morning and all afternoon and in the evening we go to the opera, but we don't interrupt the proceedings with vaudeville." Even with the vaudeville, the convention was dulness itself until Hoover appeared.

The speaking? Well, so far as any recognition of the dangerous situation of the world is concerned or any intelligent discussion of our own grave crisis, the speeches would have been unworthy of the smallest county fair. The keynoter, Senator Steiwer, was execrated by every intelli-

A Kansas Family Affair

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Borah Represented Himself

gent Republican editor here. The *Herald Tribune* said editorially that he showed how to lose and not how to win a campaign, but its representatives privately used far less polite language than that. Snell as permanent chairman went over the same ground a bit more effectively—he probably was wise enough not to accept the aid of the twenty-one counselors who had spoiled Steiwer's broth. I've been over both these speeches, line by line, and Hoover's also, and I cannot find a really concrete suggestion as to how the economic situations they complain of can be remedied. The whole strategy has been to concentrate the attacks upon the President and to charge him with treason, oath-breaking, fascism, and communism. If that is kept up, it is obvious that it will cause a reaction in the President's favor. It is well to talk of having a President with a conscience, but those who urge this should set the example of being conscientious enough not to impugn the President's motives or bring ridiculous and hysterical charges against him. Ungrammatical as it was and distinctly hysterical, Hoover's speech was effective, and he may well be satisfied with the fifteen-minute cheering which greeted him, for it was genuine and spontaneous.

Like all the other speeches, Hoover's had no reference to the crux of the whole matter—our relations to the rest of the world. The worst of this convention was its utter remoteness and detachment from the world as it is. One would think that when the nation stands again in utmost danger of war, when democracy is everywhere threatened by absolutism and dictatorship, a great party assembled to take counsel on the state of the Union would have devoted much time to discussion of what was going on at home and abroad. Not at all. Peace, disarmament, neutrality—these were not even mentioned. In this respect as in others the platform is a disgrace. The Kansans, out of an utterly needless fear of Borah, let him write the international plank. Bill White, ex-Governor Goodrich, and the others calmly let Borah act not only for the platform committee but for the entire convention. The platform does not represent the party's opinion but only Borah's. It is current gossip that Landon wanted to denounce the reference to the World Court but refrained from a direct break with the convention. Yet the fact remains that out of sheer cowardice the narrowest isolationist was permitted to write this plank. Borah represented nobody but himself. He cut a miserable figure in his interview with a corps of correspondents, who left the room with ill-concealed contempt for his backing and filling. Had the committee threatened Borah, as it well could have, with reprisals in Idaho, he would have gone under the nearest bed. He should have been utterly ignored, for he would not have bolted but merely have sulked at home. Whether one believes in the League and the World Court or not, this is a shameful way to handle a vital international problem in the quadrennial convention of a great party. If Borah's reputation survives it, it will be surprising. The humor was grim with which an Idaho delegate remarked that the delegation was for Borah "as long as he hung together."

Finally it remains to be added that the Old Guard was represented by a handful of men only. Not a member of Hoover's Cabinet took part in the convention. The old order is certainly disappearing, and it was highly significant that Walter F. Brown, Hoover's Ohio-gang Postmaster General was defeated for reelection as national committeeman by a rich bank president and coal-mine owner from Massillon — not much of a change possibly so far as liberalism is concerned, but still one to be rejoiced at. If this disappearance of the old leaders is amazing, it was still more incredible to sit in a Republican convention and to hear speech after speech pleading for freedom of the individual, freedom of the press, and so on. This new-found passion for human liberty has been forced upon the party largely by Franklin Roosevelt's errors. Not since the Civil War has the Republican Party busied itself with any American's freedom; under its recent Presidents we were all becoming more and more slaves to the big interests, and Hoover, Coolidge, and Harding cared no more about the constant breaches of civil rights all over the United States than has Franklin Roosevelt, who has yet to say his first word against these infringements of the Constitution. But let us be grateful for the new stand of the Republicans. Perhaps Landon and Knox, Hamilton and Fletcher, will now apply for membership in the Civil Liberties Union.

Hoover—Effective but Irrelevant

[*Mr. Villard's regular page, Issues and Men, will appear next week as usual.*]

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Mr. Hearst's Convention

BY HEYWOOD BROUN

IN ALL fairness to the Republican national convention it must be said that it could have been much worse. I'm not speaking now of its quality as a theatrical entertainment—everybody admits that in this respect it was deplorable. What I have in mind is the social significance of the gathering. It is my impression that the Republican Party has moved one and three-quarters inches to the left. The G. O. P. has so constantly frozen the ball when in power or indulged in purely defensive punting that to some extent this very slight gain may be mistaken for a first down. The head linesman ought to be called to the middle of the field to measure. As usual the Republicans are in the middle.

Time alone will tell to what extent Alf Mossman Landon is a liberal. His platform telegram cuts both ways. The suggestion of the possibility of an amendment was couched in the mildest possible terms; yet even so it was a step forward. But the vague hand-wave to the gold standard was distinctly reactionary. It is a pity that the platform writers of the Republican Party are always ambidextrous. The party gives and the party takes away.

Such changes as have occurred in Republican leadership and liberality are largely superficial. Some of the older bosses are gone, and new men, a little younger and a little more westerly, have taken their places. But if Landon is a Kansas Coolidge, in all probability Hamilton will prove to be a Topeka Will Hays or even a small-town Farley. At first view the new campaign manager seemed far more interested in tactics than in principles. I make this charge with no great rancor, for that is the way the game has always been played. I merely suggest that Farleyism is a fake issue. It may go with the voters, but any Republican politician, after the second drink, will admit that his chief complaint against Jim is his political shrewdness. They hope that Hamilton can do as well.

Up to date he has made some bad blunders. John Hamilton took not much more than six or seven minutes before saying, "I place in nomination for the Presidency of the United States the name of the Governor of Kansas, Alfred Mossman Landon." I thought it was one of the greatest nominating speeches I'd ever heard. None of the phrases were particularly eloquent but the whole thing had been simple and short. The demonstration was about as lively as the caliber of the convention could afford. But to my consternation I suddenly found that John Hamilton had done no more than a preface and that he purposed to go on again as soon as the mild din was over.

You can't do that. It's against tradition and against common sense. The custom of conventions is that as soon as you have named your man you must sit down again. And that's one of the few convention customs that are really reasonable. Hamilton tried to get two demonstrations for his candidate instead of one from a convention which hardly had the energy for a single hoopla.

But Hamilton's greatest blunder lay in not fighting more fiercely against the nomination of Colonel Frank Knox for the Vice-Presidency. I don't mean that the good gray colonel is a devil with horns or that his mentality is below the run of the mine supply of Throttlebottoms but in naming the publisher of the Chicago *Daily News* the convention let two cats out of the bag. A strong effort was made to keep quiet about Hearst. Although he is the chief adviser of Governor Landon, his discoverer, and his leading propagandist, William Randolph Hearst came up in no discussion on the floor. Still, the Democrats are not likely to forget that for some five years Colonel Knox was general manager for Hearst.

Indeed, the significant thing about the Republican convention is a real change in the power directly behind the throne. The convention practically announced that the newspapers of America not only represent big business but are actually big business themselves. They have been the shock troops for the financial interests for many years. Now the brass hats are prepared to let them openly shoulder the greater part of the show. This decision may have been partly brought about by a recognition of the fact that the slaughter in the campaign will be terrific.

Again it may be that some strategists felt that the Hearst issue might be met by saying in effect, "It isn't just Hearst who is running Landon but all the great publishers of America." It seems to me that this is a decision made by men who are drunk with power. The editors of America are naive enough to believe that their readers love them. That good old slogan "the freedom of the press" has been so useful as a weapon to serve every material interest of newspaper owners that it is being trotted out again as a campaign issue. The voters of America are being asked to preserve democracy by turning the rulership of this country over to William Randolph Hearst, who may if he chooses ask some slight assistance from Colonels McCormick and Knox.

The cohesion of the publishing fraternity in this new plan of fourth-estate dictatorship is almost unbroken. Very few are left outside the magic circle. Even leaders of papers generally identified as liberal and pro-New Deal have been extremely polite in dealing with the Republican proceedings in Cleveland. Some had the audacity to refer to Senator Steiwer as an orator even after he had delivered his keynote speech. Mr. Hoover's address was hailed practically everywhere as magnificent. Mr. Hoover had been tactful enough to refer to the courage of the American newspapers. The sage of Palo Alto can recognize a lord and master when he prances on the stage wearing across his chest an eight-column headline.

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The Case of John A. Kingsbury

BY JAMES RORTY

ON APRIL 5, 1935, the Board of Directors of the Milbank Memorial Fund announced the resignation of John A. Kingsbury, executive secretary of the fund. "Differences of opinion as to policy" was given as the reason. Behind this polite diplomatic phrase, however, lies a sorry tale which can now be publicly told. Its main features are the following:

1. A campaign by doctors to force the Milbank Fund to abandon a fifteen-year program in the field of medical economics because it favored "group payment" plans for medical and hospital care. In this campaign there developed a boycott, conducted by physicians, of the products of the Borden Company, manufacturers and distributors of milk and milk products. The boycott worked because 45 per cent of the income from the Milbank Fund's $10,000,000 capital is, or was, derived from its holdings of Borden stock; also because Albert G. Milbank, president of the Milbank Fund and chairman of the Board of Directors, is also chairman of the board of the Borden Company.

2. A concomitant and subsequent campaign of vicious, slanderous gossip directed at Mr. Kingsbury—the specific form being that classic canard of gutter politics, whispered doubts of his mental balance.

3. The highly significant about-face of Albert G. Milbank, who, besides being president of the Milbank Fund and chairman of the board of the Borden Company, is head of the great Wall Street law firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hope, and Webb, counsel for the Rockefeller interests, the Chase National Bank, and the Title Guarantee and Trust Company.

4. The panicky retreat from liberal leadership in medical economics of the Milbank Fund—a foundation committed to the principles of science and of academic freedom, which for fifteen years, under the supervision of its dismissed secretary, had done more probably than any other single agency to make possible higher standards in the health services.

To understand the details of this lurid drama, the historical setting must be recalled. The United States is today almost the only civilized country in the world which has failed to institute some form of compulsory health insurance. Here as elsewhere the efforts of social workers, enlightened physicians, and public-health officials to bring adequate medical care to the whole population have been confronted by the vested interests of "organized medicine." But in no other country has the medical hierarchy, faced with the demonstrated chaos and inadequacy of existing health services, resorted to such unscrupulous methods of sabotage and obstruction.

The long struggle to democratize the nation's health services, led first by the American Association for Labor Legislation, for a time abandoned, and then renewed under the aegis of the philanthropic foundations—especially the Milbank Memorial, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the Twentieth Century Fund, and the Pollak Foundation—came to a head in the fall of 1932, when the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care rendered its report. Although a minority of doctors on the committee dissented from the recommendation of the majority, the factual findings of the committee have never been successfully challenged. In briefest summary, they showed that, in the prosperous years at least, Americans spent more per capita for medical care than any other people and on the whole got less for their money. In 1930 the total expenditure was $3,700,000,000, or about $30 per capita. This, according to the late Edgar Sydenstricker of the Milbank Fund staff, who was generally conceded to be the leading statistician in the field, "is enough money to buy reasonably adequate care at current average prices." Yet what did we get for this huge expenditure? Again, quoting the same authority:

> In a year's time, even in a prosperous era, millions of families cannot afford to obtain any medical care; hundreds of thousands of cases of illness needing medical attention are unattended; less than 7 per cent of the population have even a partial physical examination, and less than 5 per cent are immunized against some disease. . . . Although we are accustomed to boast of our achievements in medicine and public health as manifested in a lowered mortality among infants, children, and younger adults, the death-rate among adults of middle and old age has not appreciably diminished in the past fifty years. . . . Even the mortality among mothers and infants in a large class of the population of the United States is still far above that in some other countries.

The doctors were and are among the chief sufferers from this fantastic situation. In 1929 one-third of American physicians had net incomes of less than $3,000 and one-half less than $3,800. Since the depression they have been "plowed under" at an appalling rate, and for every doctor unemployed some hundreds of patients who could not afford to pay their bills have been neglected.

The majority of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care included, among other conservative physicians, its chairman, Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, former president of the A. M. A. and Secretary of the Interior. The committee recommended that physicians practice in groups to reduce their overhead and increase their effectiveness and that they offer service to the public on a periodic-payment plan —small fixed contributions, in return for which each subscriber would receive all the medical and hospital care he needed. Unfortunately, however, the minority clique of prosperous, well-placed, and reactionary medical politicians who control the destinies of the American Medical

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Association did not realize that this plan would mean more certain income for the doctor. So they proceeded to obstruct and sabotage practically every subsequent attempt to effectuate the committee's recommendations.

On the day the report of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care was released, metropolitan city editors all over America had on their desks advance proofs of an editorial by Dr. Morris Fishbein which was published a few days later in the *Journal of the American Medical Association.* I will quote the most significant portions of this widely circulated document:

> So definite was the trend of the committee's studies in this direction [so-called "socialized medicine"] that one must view the expenditure of almost $1,000,000 with mingled amusement and regret. . . . The *Journal* has pointed out repeatedly that such practices will mean the destruction of private practice; that they represent the exploitation of physicians for the gain of business; that they put medical schools into competition with their own graduates; and that they are, in a word, "unethical." . . .
>
> The alignment is clear: on the one side the forces representing the great foundations, public-health officialdom, social theory—even socialism and communism inviting to revolution; on the other side the organized medical profession of the country urging an orderly evolution.

Not satisfied with this burst of demagogic nonsense, Dr. Fishbein returned to the attack in subsequent issues. On December 10, 1932, he said:

> Intent on their daily and nightly task of preventing disease, healing the sick, and ministering to the afflicted, they [physicians] have given scant attention and but little of their time to a consideration of the way in which their work was being invaded by big business. . . . This is the question of Americanism versus Sovietism for the American people.

The medical politicians soon realized that the progressive doctors, together with the social workers, public-health workers, and economists, backed by the liberal foundations, were determined not merely to give effect to the mild recommendations of the majority report but to press for legislative action in terms of compulsory health insurance. It would appear that some of the medical obstructionists then determined upon "direct action." Because the Milbank Fund technicians, specifically John A. Kingsbury, the late Edgar Sydenstricker, and Dr. I. S. Falk, had been outspoken and effective in their public advocacy of health insurance, and because the fund had an Achilles heel in its Borden investments, the attack centered from the beginning upon this particular foundation.

A boycott of Borden products boiled up early and actively in Indiana. Other state and county medical journals soon began to print unveiled incitements to doctors to boycott the Borden Company. Reports of progress detailing the cumulative effects of the boycott followed. Eminent names are signed to some of this literature. For example, Dr. Nathan B. Van Etten, then vice-speaker of the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association, in a published letter to the editor of the Bronx County *Medical Bulletin* wrote:

> It is difficult to reconcile the individualistic accomplishments of the chairman of the directors [of the Borden Company] with the collectivistic activities of the president of the foundation [the Milbank Fund] in the delivery of medical service. . . .

Most astonishing of all, however, were signed assurances, printed in the same publication, from Louis J. Auerbacher, president of the Dryco Company, a Borden subsidiary, and director of medical relations of the Borden Company, to the effect that he was "100 per cent with the doctors" and was doing everything in his power to get the fund and its employees out of medical economics.

In February, 1935, the following piece of propaganda, whose origin is not known, appeared in the Philadelphia *Medical Roster and Digest,* and was reprinted in many state and county medical journals:

> KNOW YOUR FOUNDATIONS
>
> We are often unmindful of the eventual fate of the dollars we place in the hands of our business friends. . . . At times we may discover to our dismay that his profits are applied to philanthropy that is ill-directed or actually destructive. A man may be the soul of honor and possessed of rare business acumen and yet be misled by social and economic soothsayers to turn his millions into a foundation the activities of which are not above reproach.
>
> As illustrations we might consider the foundations which have lately interested themselves in the problems of medical care of the people, and some of which have vigorously espoused the cause of socialized medicine. That many of the dollars used by these foundations to the detriment of the practice of medicine have been furnished directly or indirectly by the medical profession goes without saying. If members of the profession were to stop using or recommending the products of the corporations supporting these foundations, the enthusiasm of their social experiments would be cooled more readily than by any amount of verbal protest. In fact, it has been rumored that one of the foundations has already modified its elaborate plan to sell state medicine for the simple but effective reason that many discerning physicians have stopped prescribing a certain product.

There is appended a brief listing of the four foundations referred to, with the Milbank Fund heading the list, and the concluding injunction: "If you do not approve policies of these foundations, make certain that you are not contributing indirectly to their campaign funds. Know your foundations."

Conceivably, both the Milbank Fund and the Borden Company might have found this sort of thing actionable. But Milbank had already practically surrendered in a speech before the Indiana secretaries. And the ineffable Mr. Auerbacher, representing the Borden Company, had presented to Mr. Milbank, Mr. Kingsbury, and the fund's technicians an alternative program for the fund that would have withdrawn it entirely from the field of medical economics. When this program, which had to do with the nutritional values of milk, was curtly rejected both by Mr. Kingsbury and Mr. Milbank, Mr. Auerbacher returned to his ardent collaboration with the embattled medicos.

Still Mr. Kingsbury received no direct intimation that his dismissal was being considered, although rumors to this effect were current everywhere among medical men. But the hunt was nearing its end. The Detroit *Medical*

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News of April 29, 1935, announced the kill as follows:

NOW THEY UNDERSTAND

> The Milbank Memorial Fund has announced the termination of the services of John A. Kingsbury and others with this brief explanation: "Differences of opinion as to policies." The fund clearly indicates a new understanding of the individual medical practitioner's social and economic problems. Mr. Kingsbury was the genius guiding the activities that seemed to have as their objective the socialization of medicine.
>
> Mr. Louis J. Auerbacher of New York City, president of the Dryco Company and director of medical relations of the Borden Company, was most influential in accomplishing this result, and is to be congratulated for his services to the public and to the profession.

In the face of this evidence Mr. Milbank has assured the writer that the medical boycott was not the determining factor in the dismissal of the internationally known and universally respected social worker whose efforts over a period of fifteen years, by Mr. Milbank's own acknowledgment, had placed the Milbank Fund in the forefront of American foundations, whom he had known and worked with intimately for twenty-five years, and who had been the friend and confidant of his cousin, Mrs. Elizabeth Milbank Anderson, the founder of the fund. Mr. Milbank, in fact, went so far as to assert that the dismissal of Mr. Kingsbury was determined upon almost a year before it was announced; that the execution of this decision, necessary in Mr. Milbank's opinion because Mr. Kingsbury was a "fanatic," was deferred first by the death of Mr. Kingsbury's son and then by the medical boycott of the Borden Company. Mr. Kingsbury, in turn, presents some rather convincing evidence in rebuttal of this ex post facto explanation; according to him Mr. Milbank had at least one moment of elation when he declared to Kingsbury that if it became necessary to choose between the fund and the Borden Company, he, Milbank, would choose the fund.

Mr. Milbank's assertion that the medical boycott was not the determining factor in Kingsbury's dismissal is heavily discounted by most of the informed doctors, social workers, and public-health workers with whom I have talked. Moreover, it is flatly contradicted by Mr. Kingsbury on the evidence of the decisive interview with his chief which occurred on April 1, 1935, three days before the faithful Mr. Auerbacher delivered his Message to Garcia in Detroit.

According to Mr. Kingsbury, who dictated an abstract of this three-hour interview immediately upon its completion, Mr. Milbank told him flatly that he found himself obliged to choose between his responsibility to the Borden Company and his responsibility to the fund; that even if the fund substituted other securities for its Borden stock—except possibly government bonds whose yield would be insufficient—it would still be in a vulnerable position; that he had prayed about it and arrived at the irrevocable decision that the fund could not continue under Mr. Kingsbury's leadership, for Mr. Kingsbury was at heart a socialist, intimate with such people as Brandeis, La Follette, John Dewey, and the late Theodore Roosevelt, while he, Milbank, was a capitalist who had inevitably moved to the right during the depression.

Concerning the last point there can be no dispute. On March 16, 1933, before the assembled boards of counsel of the fund, Mr. Milbank had said:

> Sickness insurance—or more precisely insurance against the costs of medical care—is needed. This, as you know, is recommended by the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care as a voluntary and local measure. But in my opinion such insurance will not produce the results contemplated unless the scheme is compulsory and at least statewide in its scope.

On a precisely similar occasion two years later, and three days before Mr. Kingsbury received his dismissal, Mr. Milbank stated:

> Our Board of Directors has not indorsed compulsory contributory health insurance or any other plan to distribute the costs of medical care. We have not sponsored any form of legislation, federal or state, bearing upon this subject nor have we given, directly or indirectly, any financial support in furtherance of such legislation.

If you talk to eminent medical politicians you may hear that, since Mr. Kingsbury was paid his 1935 salary in full and retired on a life pension of $8,000 with a provision of half that amount for Mrs. Kingsbury in the event of her husband's death, he ought to be grateful for such princely generosity and quite content to "quit and go fishing." According to Mr. Kingsbury, however, the retirement provision represented in large part merely the execution of an understanding arrived at about eight years ago. At the urgency of the late Dr. Linsley Williams, the Milbank Fund employees were then enabled to participate in the Carnegie pension system. At that time the fund undertook to pay back annuities to 1920, when the fund was started. This would have given Mr. Kingsbury about $4,000 a year even had he voluntarily resigned. The additional amount was made up partly by the fund and partly by Mr. Kingsbury's own contribution through the cashing of his life insurance. The $8,000 pension amounts to retirement on half salary, which is not ordinarily considered either unusual or excessive in corporation circles.

You may also hear that Mr. Kingsbury was really dismissed because the accidental death of his only son in June, 1934, coupled with the persecution of the medical politicians, had rendered him mentally irresponsible. I have examined the record of Mr. Kingsbury's behavior at various stages of the events here chronicled, and I have talked to several of his close associates during this period. I can say, with the knowledge that I shall be fully supported by men and women of unimpeachable integrity, that this vicious gossip is without foundation. It is in fact an all too familiar political canard.

Mr. Kingsbury is now employed by the Works Progress Administration on work for which he is eminently fitted, and his mental and physical health is excellent. As for Mr. Milbank, well, the Borden boycott was called off, was it not?

[*This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. Rorty on medical economics. The second will appear in an early issue.*]

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TVA: The New Deal's Best Asset

BY STUART CHASE

IV. The Great Transition

IN THE preceding article we noted the wisdom of the TVA in cooperating with local organizations in the distribution of power. There are other functions where the same wise cooperation is in evidence. Let us consider the land program. Here TVA works through the Extension Service units of the land-grant colleges, which have been functioning for years. The farmers have come to trust these people. A program of vocational education operates through local agencies set up under the Smith-Hughes law twenty years ago. Here again is no break with the past.

Public-health work is carried on through the State Health Department and through the long-established county agents. Dr. E. L. Bishop is the technician who is evolving the crucial program of malaria control at the reservoirs, but the contact work is done by local agencies. He has discovered among other things that alternately raising and lowering the reservoirs about a foot so disturbs the ecology of marine life at the brink that food for mosquito larvae is kept at a minimum, and the pests starve before hatching. He is working out a method for dusting reservoir surfaces by airplane to poison the larvae. He has saved $260,000 in the costs of clearing Wheeler reservoir by a new method which also aids the control of mosquitoes.

One of the most dramatic examples is the cooperation with local labor unions. This story has often been told, and I shall only review it briefly. Credit is due primarily to Dr. Arthur E. Morgan. The TVA principle is: allow no labor conflicts on government jobs, standardize the wage structure, eliminate the peaks and valleys of employment, look always at the worker's annual income, for this is what his family lives on, not on a high day rate. Business agents of the unions were at first suspicious. They put on their poker faces and prepared for the usual game of bluff. But the TVA granted collective bargaining at once and invited the agents to assist in preparing the whole bargaining structure. The policy, every item of which was checked by the unions, was adopted in May, 1935, including full machinery for grievances and wage adjustments. Some 85 per cent of the skilled workers are organized, 50 per cent of the unskilled, and 10 per cent of the white-collar group. There is a man named Killen who has a genius for settling jurisdictional disputes. The bluffing game has gone. Both sides lay their cards face up on the table. Men usually prefer to play square if you give them a chance. Norris Dam as a construction job will be a little below the average cost, yet its wages have run from 5 to 20 per cent above average. The WPA may be cutting prevailing wages, but the TVA is bettering them. There is no sabotage; output per man-hour is high. The accident rate is phenomenally low. Labor throughout the region has been won to the TVA and will fight for its continuance.

The Valley has been convinced, with the exceptions noted above. The strategy has been that of the "middle road." Planning is by democratic consent rather than by dictatorial blueprint. To balance resources against population, figure a possible living standard, and appoint every man to his post, is not an excessively difficult job on the drawing-board. I have done it myself on occasion. But to get men, particularly Americans, and particularly the native stock of the Tennessee mountains, to go to their posts is something else again. The connection is remote. Blueprints are necessary. They assess the potential well-being of any region; they furnish a goal. In the shape of land-planning maps, of course, they are as vital as working drawings for dams or integrated power load. But when it comes to the practical matter of getting people to move, of changing long-established institutions, of shifting encrusted habits and folkways, it seems to me that Dr. H. A. Morgan's policy is the right one—indeed, the only one short of revolution. Of all the many problems which the TVA is tackling this seems to me the most vital: how to make Americans conscious of their resource base, and how to encourage them to act for themselves.

There has been much confusion about the whole matter of planning. Let us see if we can get the basic concepts clear. It is agreed that our objective is to raise the living standards of a given area. There are three approaches:

First: If the area is virgin territory with few people living in it and no vested rights, the planning becomes a straight engineering job. Assess the natural resources, design the plant, and invite the people in. Examples are the Panama Canal, the original city of Washington, the PWA town in Alaska, the TVA town of Norris.

Second: Granted an inhabited area, planning may be autocratic. Vested interests which object are exiled or wiped out. People are moved about like chessmen. Prevailing institutions are swept aside. The idea is: we are going to take charge of your standard of living whether you like it or not. Examples: Liberia and other large plantation areas in the tropics; parts of Russia, Italy, Germany; coal-company towns; the state of Delaware under the du Pont dynasty.

Third: Granted an inhabited area, planning may be attempted with the consent of those who live therein. Vested interests are deflected, outgeneraled, and not encountered head on except in critical cases. Prevailing institutions and folkways are reckoned with. There are no dictatorial powers, but rather persuasion, example, yardsticks, cooperative agreements, education. Examples: Swe-

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den, Norway, Finland, many programs in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand—and the TVA.

This is not to say that the TVA is on the way to inevitable success. It may be wrecked on any of a dozen reefs. This is only to say that its goals are undeniably the right ones, that the strategy employed to reach those goals appears to be a shrewd one, that the opposition is for the moment in retreat, that visible progress is being made. The reefs are there, treacherous beneath the channel. Perhaps the power gentlemen and their courts can break not only the power yardstick but the whole experiment. I doubt this, but it is always a possibility until we break the unconscionable habits of power gentlemen. In Sweden they have been broken, but many private companies still sell power and make a good living at it. They do not, however, monkey around much with injunctions.

In the physical frame of reference the TVA makes such obvious sense that even a tory might grasp it. In the pecuniary frame the case is not so clear. As resources are built up and transformed into crops, industrial products, and energy, vested interests in scarcity outside the Valley are bound to be alarmed, even though the chances are that they will be helped more than they will be hurt by the increased prosperity of the region. Their behavior will be on all fours with the behavior of many of our best people today, who are wailing because the government spends so much, while the net effect of that spending has been to put them back on their financial feet. Plain facts are no guide in the premises, however. If enough vested interests come to believe that the TVA is destined to harm them, even though it is actually enriching them, they will gang up on it, as big business has ganged up on the New Deal, and will move heaven and hell to put it out of commission. By vested interests I mean farmers beyond the Valley as well as industrialists and power companies—indeed, all and sundry who fear for their own markets.

The TVA will certainly reach a point when the matter of developing local industries will have to be squarely met. At present this subject is in the laboratory. One hears of ceramics, canning, sorghum syrups, woodworking, and so on. I doubt if the sale of raw materials to the outside world will ever give the Valley enough in the way of exchange values to provide really adequate living standards. So the Valley will have to take some of its cheap power and produce certain strategic manufactured goods for its own consumption. Otherwise the whole experiment will hang in mid-air, like a lopsided moon. At this point every manufacturer of similar commodities outside the Valley will cry, "Ho! Help, murder and police!" Let them cry. Too much middle-road technique might end by tempering the project to so many winds that it would lose all momentum.

The TVA may be gently, even tearfully, starved to death by a Washington Administration pledged to economy, unaware that to reestablish the resource base of a large region is the soundest conceivable economy in the long run. Again, the local administration may become confused following divergent policies—dams, for instance, as against soil rebuilding—and exhaust its energies in an internal struggle, losing the united picture of an integrated watershed in which no one function takes precedence.

The future is none too clear. American institutions have changed markedly since 1929, but they must change considerably more before we can enrich our livelihood with forthright, honest regional planning. The TVA, at the present stage of what historians may some day call the Great Transition, must inevitably be a compromise—as the navigation clause which legally justifies it is a compromise—between what is and what is to be.

Finally, the world outside the Valley may sharply ask why this region should be marked off for assistance above other regions. There is a good answer to this question, but it may be disregarded. The charity is also an investment for the nation as a whole in certain ways which are worth stating categorically. The TVA can help us all:

1. By reducing our bills for electric power through the yardstick device. This is already beginning to happen.

2. By helping to prevent floods on the lower Mississippi and so saving heavy losses to people outside the Valley.

3. By giving a cheap phosphorus fertilizer to the nation.

4. By working out a practical program to replace the one-crop cotton culture of the South. This affects the whole cotton belt.

5. By working out the techniques of integrated watershed control, good for any valley.

6. By working out techniques for the control of erosion, for land use, forestry, recreation, free ways (controlled motor highways); for decentralization, resettlement, town planning; for the control of malaria; for labor policies—all of which have wide general application.

7. By creating a degree of local prosperity which will be infectious beyond the local boundaries. If average farm income can be raised from $100 to, say, $500, a large new market is created for imported goods. (As noted above, however, the beneficiaries may be so busy protesting against new Valley industries that the fact will escape them.)

8. By developing a middle-road technique for the human and institutional aspects of regional planning, applicable throughout the Republic during this phase of the Great Transition.

The TVA can help the rest of us, particularly the boys and girls of the lost generation, by giving us hope, by furnishing tangible evidence that there is a way out.

Compromise or no, to see the Authority in operation is a spiritually refreshing experience. To look at the clean, strong walls of Norris Dam between the hills of pine; to feel the will to achievement, the deep integrity of a thousand young-minded men and women, schooled in the disciplines of science, free from the dreary business of chiseling competitors and advertising soap; to know that over this whole great watershed from the Smokies to the Ohio men's faces turn to a common purpose and a common goal—these things intoxicate the imagination. Here, struggling in embryo, is perhaps the promise of what all America may some day be.

[*This is the concluding article of Mr. Chase's series.*]

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

FIVE YOUNGER POETS

A Flashing Cliff

BY MURIEL RUKEYSER

Spinning on his heel, the traveler
sees across snow a flashing cliff.
Past the plain's freeze, past savage branches
immune in ice, a frozen waterfall,
clamped in December, glistens alive.

Love, will you recognize yourself displayed?
Or is the age defective, cold with storm
to lock fast water in iron artifice,
whitening cataracts?—contempt and loss,
and nothing, in the great world, can lie calm,

travel alive, but is frozen solid,
and will not face its mirror nor speak its pain.
Will you fight winter to break in immense speed
resisting and sensitive, a waterfall-flash
sparkling full across the vicious plain?

Fight down our age, the mad vindictive time?
No victory's here. Now, any passion suffers
against proud ice, flashing, angry, and jailed.
You, maniac, catalept!
And, love. You are all rivers.

Genesis

BY THEODORE ROETHKE

This elemental force
Descended from the sun;
A river's leaping source
Is locked in narrow bone.

This wisdom floods the mind,
Invades quiescent blood,
A seed that swells the rind
To burst the fruit of good.

A pearl within the brain,
Secretion of the sense;
Around a central grain
A meaning grows immense.

January Crossing

BY CLARK MILLS

After the frenzied movement and the thunder,
salt in the mouth, and sound of voices driven
across the mind, rippling the mind, like caverned water under
low granite shelves
—never the clear word given
freely, but sound of seventy voices blown—

in this house on the crest of the northmost hill
I am alone and I am not alone
who see men to the east, buried in tumult, and men to the west,
who are still,
for I have grown about their lives, and seen
what they have seen, laughed as they laughed, grieved for
their dead
—upon the fixed ice, and across the tip-visible green
slopes to the north, and at the northern fountainhead
that branches below day and flows in seven
torrents of light about this open haven.

Such as the Trick Chameleon

BY W. R. MOSES

The art is not unlike the trick chameleon's
Whereby both oak and gum trees grow in balm
As though rich Balm of Gileads alloyed May—
An art, for fall as usual hints decay.

A cotton poverty is sick in fields,
The leaves of maples by the year worn thin,
But as, unprincipled, the air flows soft,
Chameleons, weathercocks, gums bear aloft

May cartilaginous—and surely man
Is brother to the leaf that perishes.
The sloshing acids made to burn him hard,
Remove the flesh, reveal determined shard,

May fall—and still one liquid laugh can melt,
Two little tears can melt the saline form,
Not like a sharp-edged stone, or clear medallion,
But only like the slight, the trick chameleon.

Upon Twelve

BY JOSEPHINE MILES

Now has been contrived in the increasing noonday
Some show of order wherein to be at rest,
Some stilling of the need that space be tended,
That time be pressed.

Where in our path was the ambitious clutter of morning,
The leaf shadow and stir, the brush and broom,
Now at the base of trees is a clean sunlight,
At the door, room,

We can sit with minds quiet with the loftiness, though cooler,
That the sun has for its meridian,
In the fine short space before the roof eastward
Darkens again.

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NOVELIST BITES CRITIC

BY EDMUND WILSON

JAMES T. FARRELL'S "Note on Literary Criticism"* is quite a remarkable event. For one thing, it is one of the few intelligent discussions of literature from the Marxist point of view which have yet been written by Americans. But it is especially conspicuous as being the work of one of the ablest of the younger novelists. The book suffers a little, it is true, from Farrell's characteristic faults: it is diffuse and badly organized; it runs to footnotes as long as the chapters; and the line of the argument is not always kept clear. But it is inspiriting to see a novelist getting up to argue general principles with the critics and actually showing authority in that field in which they have been pretending to instruct him. And one is surprised, after reading Mr. Farrell's novels, which derive so much of their effectiveness from the total immersion of the author in the lives of unreflecting and limited people, to discover behind them a mind capable of philosophical abstraction and analysis.

In order to take up properly all the questions raised by Mr. Farrell in this book—questions of the relation of Marxism to literature—it would be necessary to write a book oneself. I shall therefore confine myself to noting points which seem to me important.

The first thing to plant firmly in the foreground of any discussion of Marxism and literature is a definition of dialectical materialism. The most depressing thing about the Marxist disputes which have been raging in the literary reviews is that the writers who consider themselves Marxists know as little what they are talking about as the anti-Marxists with whom they are trying to argue. Both sides are always assuming that Marx's and Engels's dialectical materialism is crude economic determinism and that the aim of the Marxist critic is simply to explain the work of art in terms of its economic origins. Real dialectical materialism is of course a much more complicated affair, which allows man to make his own history, though "not just as he pleases," but conditioned by "circumstances as he finds them," which allows works of art and ideas to influence economic conditions as well as economic conditions to mold ideas and art, and which conceives the various departments of human thought as continually straining to set themselves free from the entanglements of class relations and to establish professional classes of their own. Editors of magazines really ought to demand from leftist writers nowadays some kind of certificate of competence which would show that they have at least read Marx and Engels and that they can explain dialectical materialism. Mr. Farrell does display such competence, and he goes about his task correctly when he pulls out the real Marx and Engels at the very beginning of the discussion and holds them to the heads of his opponents.

The next thing which ought to be forced upon the attention of the practitioners of leftist criticism is that, even when we understand Marx, Marxism can tell us nothing whatever about the goodness or badness of a work of art. A critic may be an excellent Marxist and yet, confronted with a bad book and a good book, both of them ideologically unexceptionable, be unable to choose between them if he is lacking in imagination and taste. That is why leftist critics with no real aptitude for literature sometimes write interestingly about inferior productions which may be taken at their surface value and have no importance save as social documentation, but are likely to go horribly astray on books by first-rate writers—because in literature of the highest quality the vision of life is likely to be complex and the moral implicit rather than explicit. Also, there are writers whose real meaning is something quite different from what they think they mean. And a critic who is insensitive to literary effects is certain to be seriously misled. This has been admirably stated by Mr. Farrell.

What Marxism *can* do, however, is throw a great deal of light on the origins and social significance of works of art. The study of literature in its relation to society is as old as Herder—or even Vico. The great bourgeois master of it was Taine—whose responses to books were so vivid that his summings up of writers and re-creations of periods sometimes rival or surpass their subjects. Marx and Engels deepened this study of literature in its relation to its social background by demonstrating clearly for the first time the importance of economic systems.

But Marx and Engels are worth listening to about literature, not merely because they invented Marxism, but because they had literary appreciation. When Lassalle sent them his poetic tragedy, "Franz von Sickingen," and asked them to criticize it, Marx replied that "setting aside any purely critical attitude toward the work," it had on a first reading affected him strongly—characteristically adding that on persons of a more emotional nature it would doubtless produce an even stronger effect; and Engels said that he had read it twice and had been moved by it so profoundly that he had been obliged to lay it aside in order to get a critical perspective. Then they make some purely literary observations: both had been poets in their youth and were exceedingly sensitive to poetry. Only after pulling themselves together and devoting some special thought to the subject, do they get to the point of analyzing the political content; but they then, in their usual masterly manner, proceed to discuss the historical period with which Lassalle's drama deals and to show him how his own political position has led him to mistake the role of his hero. One would like to be able to imagine that the members of the committee which chooses plays for the Theater Union begin by blowing their noses like Marx and Engels when a particularly affecting script is submitted to them, and

*"A Note on Literary Criticism." By James T. Farrell. The Vanguard Press. $2.50.

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only afterward go on to an ideological examination, rather than starting with a few hard-and-fast formulas and using them as a Procrustes bed.

Mr. Farrell's way of getting at this point is to show that the social-economic pigeonholes into which the leftist critics put works of literature do not constitute "categories of value." Of course not; and the incapacity of these critics to appreciate literary values is the proof of a simple lack of competence.

Then there is the question of proletarian literature. The best discussion I have ever seen of this is in Trotzky's "Literature and Revolution." Trotzky, writing in 1924, did not believe in a proletarian culture which would displace bourgeois culture in Russia. The bourgeois literature of the French Revolution had ripened under the old regime; but the illiterate proletariat and peasantry of Russia had had no chance to produce a culture, nor would there be time for them to do so in the future, because the proletarian dictatorship was to be transitory and lead the way to "a culture which is above classes and which will be the first truly human culture." And it certainly seems to be working out that way in Russia, where they have recently, with the most positive emphasis, been falling back on their classics and on able contemporary writers who learned their trade before the revolution.

The situation is, however, certainly a little different in America. Our working class and our farmers are better educated than the corresponding groups were in Russia, and it is easier for middle-class writers to share their experience; and we have lately been getting something which is perhaps proletarian literature in the sense that it deals with industrial and rural life from the point of view of the factory worker and the poor farmer under conditions which are destroying him and forcing him to fight. Yet even here, where the themes and point of view do represent a new development in our literature, the style and the form have shown no signs of making a break with the past: on the one hand, we have had since Mark Twain a classic literature which is based on the common speech, so that a more democratic idiom is hardly possible, and, on the other hand, it is evident that the proletarian writer is able to profit by the technical sophistication developed by the bourgeoisie. One of the best of the recent strike novels, "The Land of Plenty," by Robert Cantwell, obviously owes a good deal to Henry James.

Mr. Farrell does not reckon with Trotzky, and he approaches this subject in a different way. But his theory of the "carry-over value" of literature brings one back to the same considerations.

This brings us to "Art is a weapon." It is true that art may be a weapon; but in the case of some of the greatest works of art, some of those which, in Mr. Farrell's language, have the longest carry-over value, it is difficult to see that any important part of this value is due to their function as weapons. "The Divine Comedy," in its political aspect, is a weapon for Henry of Luxemburg, whom Dante, not understanding the nationalistic movement of the Italians to get away from their Austrian emperors, was so passionately eager to impose on them. Today we may say with Carducci that we would gladly have seen his "good Frederick's" crown rolling in Olona vale: "Jove perishes; the poet's hymn remains." And though Shakespeare's "Henry IV" and "Henry V" are weapons for Elizabethan imperialism, their real center is not Prince Hal but Falstaff; and Falstaff is the father of Hamlet and of all Shakespeare's tragic heroes, who, if they illustrate any social moral—such as that Renaissance princes, supreme in their little worlds, may go to pieces in all kinds of terrible ways for lack of a larger social organism to restrain them—do so without Shakespeare's being aware of it. If these works are weapons at all, they are weapons in the more general struggle of European man emerging from the Middle Ages and striving to understand his world and himself—a function for which "weapon" is hardly the right word. The truth is that there is short-range and long-range literature. Long-range literature attempts to sum up wide areas and long periods of human experience, or to extract from them general laws; short-range literature preaches and pamphleteers with the view of an immediate effect. Mr. Farrell's definition of propaganda is relevant here: "the scheme or plan or process or technique of propagating a system, a scheme, an idea or set of ideas, a doctrine, or an attitude or attitudes, all with the aim of producing acquiescence in a proposed course of action."

And this brings us to the question of what sort of period is most favorable to works of art. There seems to be an assumption on the part of some writers of the left that revolutionary or pre-revolutionary periods are for some reason particularly favorable. This is, of course, not at all the case. The more highly developed forms of literature require leisure and a certain amount of stability; and periods of revolution make both impossible. The literature of the French Revolution consisted of the orations of Danton, the journalism of Camille Desmoulins, and the few political poems that André Chénier was able to write before they cut his head off. The literature of the Russian Revolution was the political writing of Lenin and Trotzky, and Alexander Blok's poem, "The Twelve," almost the last fruit of his genius before it was nipped by the cold wind of the storm. Pre-revolutionary periods, in which the new forces are fermenting, *may* be great periods for literature—as the eighteenth century was in France and the nineteenth century in Russia—though there was a decadence after 1905. But great literature is likely to be produced not by impending revolutions but by the phenomenon of highly developed literary technique in the hands of any writer who derives strength from a set of strongly established institutions. The germs of the Renaissance are in Dante and the longing for a better world in Vergil, but neither Dante nor Vergil can in any real sense be described as a revolutionary writer: they sum up or write elegies for ages that are passing. The social organisms which give its structure to their thought—Rome and the Catholic church—are already showing signs of decay. There is no use, therefore, in attempting to identify the highest creative work in art with the most active moments of creative social change. Marx suffered from no such illusion. Mr. Farrell quotes from the "Critique of Political Economy" his statement that "certain periods of the highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general devel-

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opment of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization."

Finally, Mr. Farrell is to be congratulated for having stood up not merely to the local boys but also to the Russian panjandrums—such as Radek, whose rubbish about Joyce in "Problems of Soviet Literature" he has been able to shoot so full of holes that I hope nobody will ever again be impressed by it. And one should mention his discussion of the class struggle in literature:

> The class struggle is not something that the worker breathes, so that he goes about breathing two parts of ozone to one part of class struggle. It is an objective set of relationships, fundamental in a society, and it has a devious, shifting, differentiating influence (sometimes direct, sometimes indirect) on individuals and on classes. We cannot, then, treat the class struggle as if it were just some lumpy force pushing men in an equal and coordinate way toward two sides of a barricade where they will proceed to fire guns and throw bricks at each other. I repeat, therefore, that the class struggle, as I understand it, is a fundamental set of relationships, and that out of this fundamental set there grow many potentialities of conduct, of thought, feeling, dream, fantasy, as well as of overt action. And I say that the class struggle is not, for the Marxist, simply an article of faith. It is something that he examines, traces, correlates, understands.

The effort to examine and to understand is what Mr. Farrell has been able to bring to literature as well as to life; and it is what is most needed if the writing of the left is to perform any really serious function.

BOOKS

Soliloquy in the Dark

DAYS OF WRATH. By André Malraux. Random House. $1.75.

AFTER reintroducing Western literature to the pattern of classical tragedy in "Man's Fate," Malraux returns in this novel to that fragmentary or at least subordinate form to which it has become almost resigned in the last few centuries —the soliloquy. Through all but a few pages at the beginning and at the end we are at the center of a conflict that is waged exclusively within the individual consciousness. The antagonists, in Malraux's own words, are the hero and his "sense of life." For this struggle the central situation, the imprisonment of a German Communist agitator in a Nazi concentration camp, is a symbolical framework: the walls of the prison cell represent the impenetrable barriers set up between the individual and his fellow-men by the conditions of the modern world. Symbolical of the imminent breaking down of these barriers is the scene in which Kassner, at a particularly anguished moment, deciphers the tapping of a prisoner in a neighboring cell as the laborious spelling out of the German word for "comrade." For the most part, however, there is not even this much communication; the Nazi captors themselves are no more than the agents of a grimly automatic historical destiny. Inside there is a mind in dizzy pursuit of images that will sustain its life; outside, it is "the time of contempt," the temporary historical cancelation of those images. For unlike the heroes of "Man's Fate," whose integration was a previously accomplished fact making possible an instantaneous participation in action, Kassner is forced by his predicament into a weighing and reweighing of those ideals on which he has staked his existence. A feverish *examen de conscience* replaces the brilliant drama of the earlier book; action is stilled by introspection. It is as if Malraux had replied to the charge that action is no more than an anodyne or showy form of escape for his heroes by submitting one of them to the full pressure of circumstances that shall bring his faith to the test. Kassner is therefore comparable to the early Christian martyr, except that in every sense the arena is a private one. The physical torture inflicted by his enemies is less harrowing than the internal clash of the twin demons of faith and despair. What is required is not a public demonstration of faith but the more difficult proof of his faith to himself in a situation in which every hope is a mockery. And, finally, his triumph, when it is marked by his departing sane from the eleven days' confinement, is not salvation but the mere preservation of his belief in the possibility of salvation.

The soliloquy, both as an incidental and as a separate form, is a renowned vehicle for rhetoric; for in this form the individual is commonly engaged in opposing to his real or actual self an imaginative reconstruction of himself based on some system of moral or philosophical idealism. In Shakespeare the rhetoric derives from the hero's recognition, at the end, of his failure to measure up to his ideal; in the romantics, on the other hand, it is produced by an identification or perhaps confusion of the hero's limitations with his ideals. But in both cases the attempt at self-understanding involves a celebration of those things on which the individual believes his true identity can be based. For Malraux the only hope of integration for the modern individual lies in the creation of a society in which man himself will be restored as a value. That salvation for the race is a prerequisite to salvation for the individual is the first principle both of his ethics and of his psychology. It is the conviction which, operating actively in the conduct of Kyo and others in "Man's Fate," becomes rhetorically explicit in the present work. The climax is not a decision, that is, a spontaneous act of will, but an experience, the moment in which Kassner assembles the scattered fragments of his personality by identifying a strain of music heard through the walls of his cell with the struggle of his comrades throughout the world in the same cause.

> It was the call of those who, at this very hour, were painting the red emblem and the call to vengeance on the houses of their murdered comrades, of those who were replacing the names on street signs with names of their tortured fellow-workers, of those in Essen who had been beaten down with bludgeons, and who, as they lay there, limp like strangled men, their faces gory with the blood that streamed from their mouths and noses, because the S. A. men wanted them to sing the "Internationale," had shouted the song with such fierce hope ringing in their voices that the noncommissioned officer had drawn his revolver and fired. Kassner, shaken by the song, felt himself reeling like a broken skeleton. These voices called forth relentlessly the memory of revolutionary songs rising from a hundred thousand throats . . . their tunes scattered and then picked up again by the crowds like the rippling gusts of wind over fields of wheat stretched out to the far horizon. But already the imperious gravity of a new song seemed once more to absorb everything into an immense slumber; and in this calm, the music at last rose above its own heroic call as it rises above everything with its intertwined flames that soothe as they consume; night fell on the universe, night in which men feel their kinship on the march or in the vast silence, the drifting night, full of stars and friendship . . .

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This is rhetorical writing of a very high order, and of a general type that has perhaps not appeared in France since the romantic movement. It is language infected by positive vision until, like that of Marlowe and the early Elizabethans, it takes on vigorous new rhythms and a fresh accretion of imagery. But it is also subject to all the objections that we commonly raise against rhetoric. It is the reflection of ideas and values which have not yet been wholly assimilated by the sensibility, so that at times Kassner seems to be resolving his conflicts by a kind of verbal self-hypnosis. From the standpoint of its author's work as a whole "Days of Wrath" is almost certain to be regarded as a momentary lapse from that full conviction about his theme which made possible the highly disciplined art of "Man's Fate." Its excitement resides too much in a certain use of language and too little in the ordering of materials.

WILLIAM TROY

The Machinery of World Peace

ON THE RIM OF THE ABYSS. By James T. Shotwell. The Macmillan Company. $3.

THE title of Dr. Shotwell's book does not imply, as one might assume at first sight, that the world is about to plunge headlong from a precarious precipice into the chaos of war and revolution. It refers to a figure of speech once used by M. Paul-Boncour, who "pictured the nations as in an abyss shaped in concentric circles which, from the outer rim of greatest security, constantly narrow as they deepen toward the center of the gulf where those reside who are most threatened by war and have suffered most from it." Since the danger of war menaces various nations in widely differing degrees, their obligation to take military action in case of aggression should be correspondingly graded. In a universal system of collective security built "in concentric circles of graded responsibilities for the maintenance of peace" the United States, according to Dr. Shotwell, would stand on "the outer rim" of the abyss, but not beyond the danger zone of war. The task he undertakes in this volume is to describe the forms of cooperation which the United States could establish with the League of Nations while remaining outside its membership.

Dr. Shotwell begins his argument like one who has tasted the Dead Sea fruit of disillusionment and has measured the distance between ideal and reality. He opposes both the doctrinaire pacifists, who reject all solutions falling short of unworldly perfection, and the doctrinaire isolationists, who would preserve the United States under a glass bell, free from the taint of outside political—but not economic—contacts. His middle-of-the-road program contemplates an arrangement by which the United States, without joining the League, could participate in the Council or Assembly whenever its interests were involved, thus avoiding the misunderstandings, cross-purposes, and duplication of effort which characterized the Manchurian and Chaco affairs. The United States, under Dr. Shotwell's scheme, "would have the negative duty of not impeding the pacific processes of the world community, but could not be looked to for those positive measures"—under the bugaboo Articles X and XVI of the Covenant—"which even the European states are unwilling to take unless they coincide with national self-interest."

Dr. Shotwell's argument thus appears to be based on a restudy of the role which the League may be expected to play in world politics, as demonstrated by Japan's invasion of Manchuria and Italy's conquest of Ethiopia. The cause of the League, in his opinion, is by no means hopeless; "but it is obvi-

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ously at a crisis that calls for the strictest realism." Yet far from displaying such realism, Dr. Shotwell answers the major problems of our day with copy-book aphorisms, making no effort to translate them into terms of effective international action. Such general statements as "police action is not enough by itself to maintain peace"; "the only way out of the vicious circle . . . is by genuine loyalty to the system of collective security and by real effort to make Article XIX [regarding treaty revision] a more effective means for granting justice"; "collective security must mean real security"; "social justice is the basis of permanent peace"; the choice which confronts us "depends upon whether the procedure of peaceful change can really be made effective"—all these statements, while good and wholesome in themselves, are only jumping-off places for a process of thought which Dr. Shotwell fails to pursue.

To take only one important issue which hangs over the world like the sword of Damocles: what constitutes "justice" in international affairs? Is there such a thing as abstract justice? When we speak of "justice for Germany" do we mean a settlement which would satisfy Hitler, such as absorption of Austria or the German part of Czecho-Slovakia by the Third Reich, or a settlement which would take into consideration the interests of the international community as a whole? Does "justice" require the return of Germany's African colonies—or would this represent "injustice" to the natives, handed over to the rule of a government intoxicated with racial superiority? Can treaty revision, even if theoretically desirable, be effected today without resort to war? When Hitler or Mussolini attempts to gain his ends by aggression, should we make concessions in the hope of pacifying the aggressor or at least localizing the conflict, or should we resist dictatorships on the march by force if necessary?

Instead of probing these and kindred questions, Dr. Shotwell spends most of his time tinkering with the machinery of international peace, adding here a screw, there a piston, in the hope of making it work. Yet important as is the development of international institutions, it should not be allowed to overshadow the substance of life itself. The mere drafting and signing of new treaties will not advance the cause of peace. What we need is not more or better machinery, but sterner determination to use such instruments as are already available. Where there is a will to peace, a way will be found. Without the will, all the peace machinery which can be invented in the research laboratories of the world will prove so much useless scrap. In this critical period our crying need is not for engineers familiar with structural problems but for social philosophers who can tell the engineers the ends their building must serve. One looks in vain in Dr. Shotwell's book for a well-defined philosophy of international relations.

VERA MICHELES DEAN

Fable in Naples

SANFELICE. By Vincent Sheean. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

MR. SHEEAN has found the fable for his new novel in Naples at the close of the eighteenth century. A boorish king and a rapacious queen have ground the city under their heel and bled it dry. Queen Caroline, the real ruler, abhors the French, who guillotined her sister, Marie Antoinette, and adores the English; Lady Hamilton is her confidante, Nelson her hero. Through England she hopes to regain Malta for her kingdom, and with outrageous assertiveness she sends an army to fight the French in northern Italy. The campaign fails, and the court abandons Naples for Palermo. French troops, with Italian Jacobin refugees in their train, advance upon Naples, subdue a beggarly mob which has remained royalist, and set up a republic. But the infant republic, with no confederate except a France too busy to help it and with all the rest of Europe for its enemy, soon topples; its leaders are imprisoned and executed; and the old regime is restablished.

This is the background to "Sanfelice"—an interesting and formidable background not empty of historic lessons. The parallel with pre-revolutionary France is obvious. We have an oppressed and mismanaged kingdom with every incentive for overthrowing the dominant order. We have incendiaries and *philosophes* prepared to agitate and lead. We have an army, even if a foreign one, prepared to effect the transfer of power. But the parallel is incomplete, and for two excellent reasons the adventure miscarries. First, the masses will not turn against their masters; second, the little republic becomes a pawn in international politics and, unaided at home, is annihilated from outside.

In so far as he has played the historian Mr. Sheean has drawn for us a vivid picture of an ill-fated revolution, explaining why it took place and why it failed. In so far as this is true, "Sanfelice" jibes well enough with the social awareness of our times and stands in little danger of being underrated as a contribution to social literature. The danger is all, indeed, in the opposite direction, and because Mr. Sheean also wrote "Personal History," I suspect that "Sanfelice" will be overemphasized for its revolutionary utterances, for its expression of historical materialism, for its use of the past to assay the present, for anything and everything, that is, except for being a fairly orthodox historical novel. Yet despite the implications of the story's background, it remains an orthodox historical novel at heart, and will do little toward "informing" anyone not previously informed. I do not mean that it wholly lacks significance, or that the story of the lustrous Sanfelice is mere cloak-and-sword melodrama. But neither do I believe that, say, "A Tale of Two Cities" is wholly without significance, or a mere cloak-and-sword melodrama.

The Sanfelice herself is the kind of woman described in such blurb-French phrases as *grande passion* and *femme fatale,* and to my mind she is almost as stale as the phrases. An aristocratic Neapolitan married to a rotter who abandons her, she takes up with a bourgeois Jacobin, becomes embroiled in politics because she is sunk in love, remains royalist at heart while by the merest accident she is hailed as the Mother of the Revolution, and ends her life on the scaffold. As a woman she fails in these pages to transmit her glamor. As a symbol, her revolutionary role is, by Mr. Sheean's own showing, a mere coincidence—historically she is not integral to the narrative; and in order to make her carry the burden of the tale Mr. Sheean has to sharpen rather too patently his wiles as a novelist. She is the most important and the least interesting character in the book. Some of the other characters—her mother, her lover, the Duke of Lauriano—are at least striking if not quite real, while the unspeakable Queen becomes a stage character of commanding vividness. One would have been angrier with her, however, had not Mr. Sheean been so angry himself.

The romantic baggage of "Sanfelice" has not only constituted a limitation; it has been a danger. It invests the book with a tinge of something meretricious. There are varieties of romance, and I think that Mr. Sheean has hit upon the very worst kind possible. He has chosen the tone of romantic irony, which is romanticism gone highbrow, and such irony is never too far from either phoniness or sentimentality. It is in the mode of a James Branch Cabell to make the Sanfelice both heroine and

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martyr of a cause she never understood or believed in. Surely the honors of the book might better have gone to an agitator, a careerist, a vacillating intellectual, a man or woman of will, or even to some anonymous befuddled member of the mob. To hand them over to a woman whose only language was passion, to a woman who even failed to want power, instrument though she was at times of other people's lives, was not the way to articulate the past or explain the precepts of history. Nor to my mind does this highly geared but feebly drawn lady much adorn a novel either. She decoyed Mr. Sheean into a theatrical mood, which was unfortunate enough in itself; but she failed to be good theater, which was fatal.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

"O Time in Your Flight"

WHO OWNS AMERICA? Edited by Herbert Agar and Allen Tate. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.

THIS is a symposium by the "Nashville agrarians," together with recruits to their company since the earlier book, "I'll Take My Stand," was published. Their philosophy and its application have broadened in the interval. While desire to rectify the culture of the South is still their starting-point, they recognize that this requires changes in the national economy.

Several things are to be said for these authors in the beginning, before any word of adverse comment. They are competent writing men, and so express their ideas attractively. They are publicists, trying to think of the general advantage, never seeking to serve selfish or local interest. They do not whine, but go resolutely about the work of convincing the average reader of the usefulness of their proposals. They represent very much more than a disgruntled literary rejoinder. Furthermore, human beings are the end and aim of their social thinking; they see the necessity of making abundant room for the development of moral values.

Fundamentally they object to the consequences of matured capitalism, with its functionless ownership, its concentration of control in a few hands, its separation of workers from production for their own use, its urbanization of the population. Recently they have been influenced by the exhibits of Messrs. Berle and Means, by the new emphasis upon regionalism, by the accounts of Scandinavia's successful attacks upon private monopoly, by the TVA and the Resettlement Administration. Fascism and the totalitarian state have stirred them to fresh efforts to prevent the small business men and independent farmers of America from flocking to the support of dictatorship.

But their thought has not struck deep enough into either the causes of their complaints or the construction of their own remedies. They fail to understand that they are not contending against social wilfulness and neglect but against a development which, by and large, was inevitable, and which was foretold ninety years ago. Their remedies are legislative or hortatory. They are utopians in the sense that they do not take account of the vitality of the forces which oppose them. They repeatedly lapse into mere wishful thinking. Nor are they at all consistent. They deplore the extension of state authority, and yet the intricate opportunist reforms which they advocate would require governmental action at every turn. The individual rather than the group is in their minds, yet they have to count upon all sorts of collective undertakings.

In economic matters one feels that they suffer from "the tyranny of the unread." Were they acquainted with the staples

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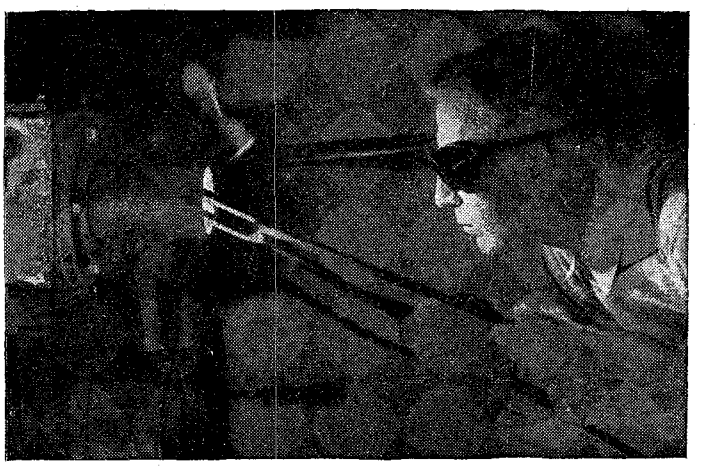

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of Socialist literature, they would themselves want to throw out half of this volume. We cannot recapture the practice of colonial and frontier America or restore its spirit through the self-reliance of subsistence farmers. Capitalism is not so much a misfortune as it is a fact; having come so far with capitalism, we must go farther and regain liberty by collectivist, not by individualist, means. The giant corporation which owns America is the prelude to the reassertion of common ownership. The whole social structure embodies a principle of growth which may be prompted and guided and checked but may not be gainsaid. It is useless to repine for what might have been. It could never have been. The country has gone through phases, and our hope is in the control of a new phase, not in return to an old one. Revolt against the devastating effects of capitalism upon culture is natural, particularly to sensitive minds, but to nourish nostalgia for vanished institutions is to cry down the wind.

The agrarians begin to arrive at a cohesiveness which sets them off, in their own view, at least, against the proletarian writers who are moved by economic determinism. The agrarians, who are really literary men rather than students of society, consider that there is too much mechanistic economics in the novels of revolt. This may be true, but the agrarians possess too little grasp of economic trends. They too easily become lyrical in impossible plans. They do not accept the first rule of good art, which is that of remaining within the limitations of one's medium. A good example in this collection is Andrew Lytle's article, The Small Farm Secures the State. This is Washington Irving revived for incredulous modern readers. These authors see visions and listen to voices. It is too harsh to say that they may next be turning to pastoral poetry, but every now and then, in these pages, one thinks one hears the shepherd's flute.

BROADUS MITCHELL

Art as Discipline

STORIES OF THREE DECADES. By Thomas Mann. Translated from the German by H. T. Lowe-Porter. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.

THE twenty-four tales here brought together represent all Thomas Mann's shorter fiction over a period of more than thirty years, ranging from Little Herr Friedemann, published in 1897, to Mario and the Magician, published in 1929. If, as Mann urges somewhat whimsically in his preface, the volume constitutes "an autobiography in the guise of a fable" as well, the fable is easily deducible from the autobiography. His earliest novel, "Buddenbrooks," published when he was twenty-five, furnishes in itself a sufficiently fabulous index to a talent that was, apparently, dedicated to its craft from birth, with all its sacred books thoroughly committed to memory.

Few living writers have achieved a place in the sun as early in youth as Thomas Mann, or sustained their high position with a similar purposefulness. The range and variety of his major novels, moreover, make it clear—if testimony of this sort is at all needful—that Mann has shunned the repetitious in his work almost as scrupulously as he has shunned the synthetic and the second-rate. Every new novel, as well as his finest *Novellen,* has been in the nature of a decision purchased at the free expenditure of energies such as only the most complete and complex spirits have it in them to give out. Like the Tonio of his admirable story, he has pursued his craft "not like a man who works that he may live, but as one who is bent on doing nothing but work," confident throughout that "he who lives does not work; that one must die to life in order to be

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utterly a creator." His exacting concern in matters of form and technique has only added to the enormity of his labors. Gifted with a sensitivity unusual among his countrymen, he has steadfastly refused to sanction the irresponsible lyricism—as Romain Rolland in France and Bunin in Russia have not—in which sense impressions are employed to substitute ecstasy for information. "Feeling, warm heartfelt feeling," he declares in the person of Tonio, "is always banal and futile; only the irritations and icy ecstasies of the artist's corrupted nervous system are artistic. . . . The very gift of style, of form and expression, is nothing else than this cool and fastidious attitude toward humanity." Instead, he has preferred to believe, with Gustav Aschenbach, aging protagonist of Death in Venice, that the artist is "happiest with an idea which can become all emotion, and an emotion all idea."

At its finest, his work takes its polish from a conflict between discipline at its most strenuous and feeling at its highest, wherein abrasive surfaces are turned upon one another like millstones, and instead of generating chaos, refine the grist of experience between them. In all these stories, even the most trivial, the terrific and sustained impact of intellect upon passion and passion upon intellect, of art as a vital principle in the process of devising forms to contain itself, of germinal forces directed, not upon a void or an ego, but upon living materials, becomes almost physically oppressive. There comes to mind, time and again, the figure of Aschenbach, whose greatest works were "heaped up to greatness in layer after layer, in long days of work, out of hundreds and hundreds of single inspirations," and who devoted "to actual composition none but his best and freshest hours."

Just such a method, doubtless, has been as instrumental in creating a Death in Venice as a "Magic Mountain." One is, however, compelled to admit that its effect has by no means been entirely good in certain of the major pieces here collected. A story of such magical potentialities as A Man and His Dog, for example, necessitating as it does a lyric approach that is free, graceful, and not without quality of artlessness, has been at least partially stifled by over-refinement. Fiorenza, the lengthy drama in three acts, is similarly, though with more artistic justice, enervated by an urbanity too rigidly held within formal reservoirs. It is only in the more clinical appraisals of temperament, such as The Blood of the Walsungs, Felix Krull, and Mario and the Magician—each more admirable than the other—that the imposition of powerful technical restraints is completely vindicated as a discipline of first importance.

It remains in the end, perhaps, a difference between degrees of inspiration, rather than between inferior or superior methods of approach. Given a theme of great intrinsic subtlety such as Death in Venice, or a theme of great intrinsic poignancy such as Disorder and Early Sorrow, or a theme of great intrinsic moral earnestness such as Mario and the Magician, the emotional counterpoint summoned up to sustain and convey it to the page adequately complements the ideational. In the less impassioned sketches which make up a large portion of the book, wherein emotion cannot keep pace with idea, it is perhaps sufficient that Mann should say, as in A Gleam, "Hush! Let us look into a human soul. On the wind, as it were, and only in passing, only for a page or so," and conclude as summarily with, "We stop here. No more, it is enough. Just this one priceless detail." If it is true that the point of departure in cases of this sort is precisely the point at which emotion should transcend and irradiate art, it is hardly any less true that Mann has, in each of his major pieces, achieved brilliantly this very perfection of synthesis, and in so doing, achieved the perfection of art itself.

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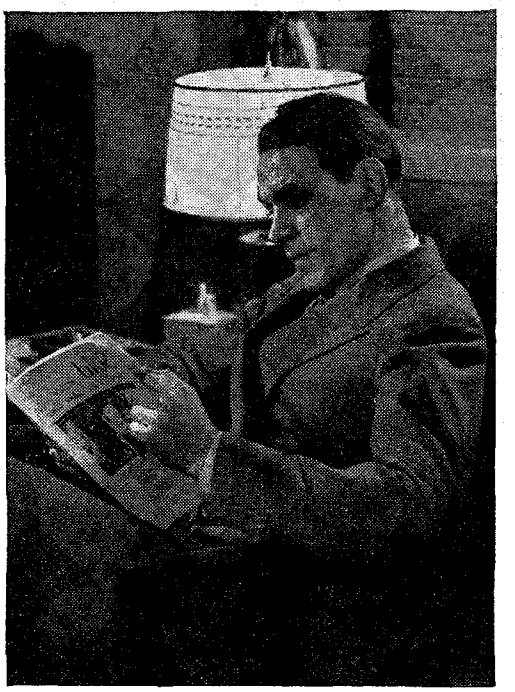

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The Moral Top of the World

TRAVELS IN TWO DEMOCRACIES. By Edmund Wilson. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

THE Soviet Union is by far the most important event of our own time. In history it is a major landmark in the stirring, unromantic struggle of man, the primitive communist, to assimilate his own inventions and the gigantic fruits of his collective labor, and arrive at a final form of communism which will be a heaven on earth, paved with gold perhaps but requiring no death certificate for entry and equipped with the latest thing in streamlined bathrooms and all the arts of life.

It is no wonder that the first settlement on the high plateau of socialism should have aroused the curiosity of all peoples in an intensely personal sense. It is not surprising, either, that that little band of men and women who do the world's reporting was thrown completely off its base by a major event in world history. It is nevertheless a pity that most reporting on the socialist outpost has been either glorification or slander and that the reality of Soviet Russia has seldom broken through. The little men on the right have seized upon every backward element in a country just emerging from the Middle Ages and ascribed it to socialism. The little men on the left have indulged in a form of utopianism which would have offended Marx even more deeply than that of his own day, for if lying rosily about the future seemed to him "silly, stale, and basically reactionary," what would he have thought of romanticizing the first experimental station in socialism?

It is, of course, impossible to be impartial in reporting Soviet Russia for the reason, already implied, that every living being is too deeply involved in what it represents to see it with cold eyes. It *is* possible to be honest. And when scrupulous honesty is combined with a talent for recognizing and setting down significant detail, we get such an account as that which makes up the second half of Edmund Wilson's observations in two democracies. Its tone is that of a man talking off the top of his mind. Its form is casual, to give play to those quick, often violent, shifts of scene and feeling which make a Soviet journey one of the most stimulating as well as one of the most exhausting of modern experiences. But the accuracy, both emotional and pictorial, with which Mr. Wilson has set down a traveler's-eye view of Soviet life and Russian character indicates with what care the observer, as writer, ordered his materials. For another reason, although the form is casual, the effect is not. There is evident throughout an intense determination to be completely truthful in the face of a world-shaking phenomenon, "a new set of social dimensions," and this intensity gives to the whole an emotional force that binds together its apparently casual parts. Such an attitude, of course, leads Mr. Wilson to commit, in the name of reality, many a sin against left utopianism, for he reports the ridiculous, the inefficient, and the reactionary in Soviet life as well as its noble, delightful, intelligent, and moving aspects. But it also adds great weight to the affirmation with which the book closes.

"Travels in Two Democracies" is interesting from another point of view, in that it records the impact of the first socialist state upon the mind and heart of an American deeply concerned with the future of his own country. Mr. Wilson is already persuaded that socialism is the ultimate solution. He is even convinced that "the socialist ideal is more natural to us than to the Russians." But he has not yet seen devised a method for achieving socialism in a petty-bourgeois democracy whose population is not simply part slave and part free and therefore bound to proceed to a decisive conflict, but where almost every

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individual is part slave and part free and therefore deprived of that desperate singleness of purpose which leads to action.

The search for a solution for America and for the American is in fact the theme of Mr. Wilson's book. The first section, U. S. A. November, 1932—May, 1934, is made up of miscellaneous articles and sketches ranging from a deadly analysis of Charles E. Mitchell to a visit to the author's old family home. This section lacks the unity of the Russian section. The quality of the writing, also, is uneven. It does serve as a stock-taking of past and present, and as prelude to a Soviet journey.

Mr. Wilson's "final reflections" are illuminating and interesting. He has already noted the sense of precariousness which hovers over the first socialist settlement. "Here, even by the tomb of Lenin, . . . the fate of humanity itself must sometimes seem precarious. They must sometimes be haunted as we are by a terror lest all we have done and are doing may lose its meaning and value, and slide back to ruin again." It is not surprising that his strongest impression of the Russians is one of extraordinary heroism in all walks of life. "And the effect of this," he writes, "is very sobering. Only idiots gush about Russia. Only idiots pretend that life there is easy." It is this heroic determination in the face of great odds to establish socialism on a firm basis which makes the traveler in the Soviet Union feel that he is "at the moral top of the world where the light never really goes out." As for America, Mr. Wilson is convinced that "American republican institutions, disastrously as they are always being abused, have some permanent and absolute value," and that they will not necessarily be destroyed in the course of the transformation of society.

Mr. Wilson ends his reflections with a paragraph on Lenin's relationship to the Russian people, which every traveler to Russia must have felt. It is, as he points out, a central force in Russian socialist life. I came upon it on a Black Sea steamer when I talked to a woman from Leningrad who had been a young girl in 1917. The name of Stalin lit no fires, but when I asked her if she had seen Lenin, her eyes lighted up and her reply was the Russian word which means both beautiful and red. Lenin, she said, was "krassivy, krassivy." Mr. Wilson has offended some communist partisans by his elevation of an individual, even though it be Lenin himself, who had the genius to evoke from the "loose and sluggish plasm" of his countrymen "all those triumphs to which life must rise and to which he thought himself the casual guidepost." Mr. Wilson himself would probably be quick to agree that neither masses nor leader can function one without the other. Meanwhile American itself offers the best example of the helplessness of masses waiting to be led but without leaders possessed of that accuracy of insight and courage of judgment which Mr. Wilson celebrates.

MARGARET MARSHALL

The Instincts of a Bard

A FURTHER RANGE. By Robert Frost. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

IT IS a hard thing to say of a man grown old and honored in his trade, that he has not learned it. Yet that is what Mr. Frost's new volume, with its further range into matters of politics and the social dilemma, principally demonstrates. The new subjects, as they show themselves poetic failures, reflect back and mark out an identical weakness in poems on the old subjects. It is a weakness of craft, and it arises from a weakness, or an inadequacy, in the attitude of the poet toward the use and substance of poetry as an objective creation—as something others may use on approximately the same level as the poet did. Mr. Frost is proud of his weakness and expresses it

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THE *Nation* ANNOUNCES...

Two changes of importance to those who use *The Nation* in reference work will be made soon.

Date of Issue—The date of issue of *The Nation* will be advanced from Wednesday following the day of publication to Saturday. There will be no change in the day of publication. The next issue, on sale in the East on Thursday, June 25, will be dated Saturday, June 27, 1936.

Volume Numbers—In accordance with the American Recommended Practice for Reference Data for Periodicals, beginning with the issue of July 4, 1936, the Volume data will appear in Arabic numerals. Numbers within the volume will progress from 1 to 26. There will be two volumes published each year, as now, beginning January and July. The issue of June 27, 1936 will be Volume CXLII, Number 3704. The issue of July 4, 1936 will be Volume 143, No. 1.

in the form of an apothegm at the close of the poem called To a Thinker.

> At least don't use your mind too hard,
> But trust my instinct—I'm a bard.

If we may distinguish, and for more than the purposes of this review, a bard is at heart an easygoing versifier of all that comes to hand, and hence never lacks either a subject or the sense of its mastery; and a poet is in the end, whatever he may be at heart, a maker in words, a true imager, of whatever reality there was in his experience, and every resource of the mind must be brought to bear, not only to express his subject, to transform what Mr. Frost means by instinct into poetry, but also to find his subject, to know it when he sees it among the false host of pseudo-subjects. These are the labors of craft—in relation to which the bard's labors are often no more than those of a pharmacist compounding a prescription by formula. In the old bards we look mostly for history, in the modern for escape. Swinburne is the type of modern bard, Yeats of the modern poet. It may be that by accident a bard is also a poet—as Swinburne was; but a poet who writes with only the discipline of a bard writes unfinished poetry of uncertain level and of unequal value. That is the situation of Mr. Frost; and when, as now, he attempts to make poems of his social reactions without first having submitted them to the full travail of the poetic imagination, the situation becomes very clear.

More precisely, taking the longest and most "serious" poem in the book, Build Soil—A Political Pastoral, which is a blank-verse dialogue between Tityrus the poet and Meliboeus the subsistence farmer, we find not poetry but an indifferent argument for a "one-man revolution" turned into dull verse. As bad religious poetry versifies the duty of an attitude toward God, bad social poetry versifies the need of an attitude toward society. Both the duty and the need may be genuine and deeply felt—it is our stock predicament and the great source of fanaticism and deluded action—but before either attitude can become poetry it must be profoundly experienced not only in intention but in the actuality of words. It is the object of craft, and only craft can secure the performance, to complete and objectify the act of experience. Craft in poetry is not limited to meter and rhyme, cadence and phrasing, gesture and posture, to any of the matters that come under the head of incantation, though it must have all these; for great poetry, craft is the whole act of the rational imagination. It must combine the relish and hysteria of words so as to reveal or illuminate the underlying actuality—I do not say logic—of experience.

Mr. Frost does not resort to the complete act of craft. His instincts as a bard do not drive him to the right labor, the complete labor, except by accident and fragmentarily, in a line here and a passage there. In a sense, his most complete and successful poems, the short landscape images where versification seems almost the only weapon of craft needed, are unfinished fragments. The good lines emphasize the bad, the careless, and the irrelevant, and make them intolerable; which is most often the case in activities which depend at critical points upon instinct. Instinct is only dependable in familiar circumstances, and poetry seldom reveals the familiar. A consideration of Desert Places, which is as good as any poem in the book, will show what I mean.

> Snow falling and night falling fast oh fast
> In a field I looked into going past,
> And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
> But a few weeds and stubble showing last.
>
> The woods around it have it—it is theirs.
> All animals are smothered in their lairs.

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I am too absent-spirited to count;
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less—
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

The same profound instinct that produced the first two stanzas of observation becoming insight allowed Mr. Frost to end his poem with two stanzas of insight that fails to reach the viable point of becoming observation. It may, practically, be a matter of bad rhyming in the fourth stanza, of metrical shapelessness in the third; but at the bottom, in so ambitious a poet as Mr. Frost, it must have been instinct that made the second pair of stanzas evade the experience forced into them by the first pair.

R. P. BLACKMUR

Social-Security Tactics

INSECURITY, A CHALLENGE TO AMERICA. By Abraham Epstein. Third (revised) Edition. Random House. $4.

WITH characteristic incisiveness Abraham Epstein has rechristened the Social Security Act "our Social Insecurity Act." Such pointed comment from a leader whose sincerity and vigor compel respect has caused consternation among many of his admirers. In the third edition of his "Insecurity, a Challenge to America," he retreats not at all but restates his views in more extended form.

The "insurance" features of the act—the old-age benefits and the unemployment-compensation programs—are the principal object of his attack, and properly so. The old-age benefits are both ethically and economically unsatisfactory. There is little social justice in a scheme that places upon the shoulders of those in the lower-income groups the major part of the cost not only of their own old-age security but also of the "unearned annuities to be paid after 1942 to those who are now old." There is as little economic wisdom in the gargantuan reserve resulting from the naive embodiment of private-insurance principles into a social-insurance plan. This financial snowball will be difficult to control and have unpredictable, but certainly disturbing, effects on the economic system.

The provisions in the act for unemployment compensation are even more sharply condemned. Mr. Epstein points out that the federal government has shirked its plain duty of establishing minimum standards of protection in the face of a surprisingly unanimous plea for them from labor leaders, social workers, and experts. Indeed, the federal government has studiously sought to leave the states free to set up almost any type of compensation system. Thus the door is left "wide open to any weak and harmful provisions local politicians may see fit to enact." The adoption of the tax-offset device instead of the more convenient and widely urged subsidy, or grant-in-aid, to facilitate state action, further obstructs federal prescription of minimum standards and in addition exposes the act to more serious constitutional challenge. Its administrative complexity must also intensify the opposition to be expected from employers.

Mr. Epstein by his well-grounded and forcefully expressed criticisms raises three perplexing questions: Do the faults of the act justify references to "the failure of the Social Security

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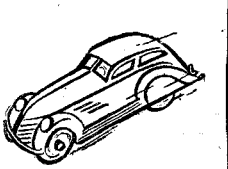

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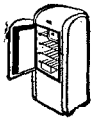

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Act" and the change of title that he has suggested? Is it tactically desirable to oppose the act in these terms? Why was the act passed in so faulty a form? Mr. Epstein discriminates between major and minor defects. "The defects involved in the old-age-retirement plan can easily be remedied since it is based on a sound national plan. Changes can be made without difficulty in the contributions and benefits. The huge reserves can be eliminated." He believes that the provisions for grants-in-aid to encourage the setting up of state pensions for the aged, the blind, and dependent children may be strengthened by more stringent federal control of standards, although here he seems somewhat optimistic. The unemployment-compensation program, on the other hand, can be made satisfactory only by radical change. Clearly, the weaknesses of the various parts of the act are not all equally fundamental.

The trenchancy of Epstein's attack is influenced by his fear that the present act "must affect adversely the fate of a constructive social-insurance movement in the United States." The work of years may be destroyed by "unnecessary blunders." But in considering the best tactical approach to this imperfect act it must be remembered that political reactions are guided more by the emphatic sweeping phrase than by carefully guarded words. There is a danger that Epstein's own striking phrases of wholesale condemnation may cause the American people to "become so disillusioned that they will cast out the entire act, good and bad, and conclude that social insurance is beyond the capacity of our government."

The faults of the act cannot be attributed to either experts or social reformers. In small measure they may be due to the technical complexities in the act which hindered criticism in the legislative process. In greater measure they are due to the absence of widespread conviction that any plan to give social security to the poor at their own expense is a bad plan, and to the presence of a belief that it is better for the states to be free to do little or nothing than for the federal government to provide real security. Satisfactory social security awaits a more general acceptance both of the use of the taxing power to reduce inequalities of wealth, and of the extension of federal action in fields where the states are impotent.

EVELINE BURNS

Much About a Little Man

THOMAS DE QUINCEY. A BIOGRAPHY. By Horace Ainsworth Eaton. Oxford University Press. $5.

DE QUINCEY AT WORK. By Willard Hallam Bonner. Buffalo: Airport Publishers.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY was little in almost every way. He stood only two or three inches above five feet; his courteous and intellectual face consorted queerly with one who walked so much like a spider—"with an odd one-sided, and yet straightforward, motion, moving his legs only, and neither his arms, head, nor any other part of his body"; he was both fussy and inefficient, both grandiose and procrastinating; and he never came within a million miles of writing the great books he rather humorlessly dreamed of writing. He fancied himself a philosopher who "should accomplish a great revolution in the intellectual condition of the world," but he ended up as one who had written chiefly about himself, his habits, his eccentricities, his dreams; or, if not about himself, then about an assortment of second-rate subjects ranging from the sentimental to the macabre. He was a man, in other words, for whom it has been difficult to have respect.

Yet here from Mr. Eaton's hand is a biography of more than five hundred pages dealing with every known aspect of De Quincey's existence, and in it De Quincey becomes more interesting than many men who have been greater. He turns out to have deserved so formidable and excellent a book, every leisurely page of which is sure to be read by anyone who makes the start, and every intonation of which is in perfect biographical taste. Mr. Eaton is neither worshipful nor unsympathetic toward his subject; he merely knows him through and through, and has the art to leave him in our minds as an object of clear and sober yet fascinating knowledge. Whoever reads what Mr. Eaton has written will know an individual as few indivduals have been known.

One sign of this in the reader will be the discovery that he has no judgments to pass upon De Quincey. No moral judgments; the thousand drops of laudanum per day, the perpetual insolvency, the almost unimaginable inefficiency, the dreaminess, the foolishness—these will not even have to be forgiven in view of the far more interesting fact that they were. And no intellectual judgments either; it will not matter in the least that De Quincey was less the artist and the philosopher than he thought he was; the quality of his mind will be forgotten in its nature. We are won by the creature before we know it, and it may not occur to us to wish that he had been otherwise than exactly what he was. We learn to put up with as many as a hundred pages detailing the full story of his pitiful war with creditors—pitiful, and somewhat ridiculous too, and yet in the end a war in which we recognize De Quincey as the little champion whose colors we wear. Nor are we bored, as in another case we might be, by the perennial tedium of a magazine writer's relations with his editors; for De Quincey was never anything but a magazine writer, a desperate searcher after subjects, a haunted contributor whose letters explaining his delays were often complained of as too long to be convincing. He lived a literary dog's life, and we should despise it; but we do not for the simple reason that we see it being lived, and seeing it are moved both to compassion and to admiration. It is almost as if Mr. Eaton had been free to create De Quincey, and had done so in this book. Perhaps that is indeed what he has done, notwithstanding the evident fact that he never invents or supposes.

He leaves all sorts of things to be discovered or put together by the reader. It is only in footnotes, for instance, that one learns how long-lived the De Quinceys were. Thomas's mother was born in the early 1750's and one of his daughters died in 1917; not bad for a man who took opium all his adult life and himself endured to be seventy-four. Mr. Eaton, partly because he knows how to make comment unnecessary, seldom pauses in his narrative to indulge in criticism of any kind. When he does so he is telling; as when he remarks that De Quincey's "was a nature of much reason and little judgment," or emphasizes the importance for one who was to write so much about dreams of his having mastered "a great and precise vocabulary" and "large prose rhythms."

It is not slighting Mr. Bonner's book to consider it as an appendix to Mr. Eaton's. It consists of letters, new or newly edited, written by De Quincey or his daughters during the last decade of his life. Most of them concern the collected editions of his works which were being published by James T. Fields in Boston and by James Hogg in Edinburgh, though there is much in them of a delightfully incidental nature. They leave Mr. Eaton's picture of this decade precisely as it was; nor is it surprising to learn from their two prefaces that Mr. Eaton and Mr. Bonner were in possession of each other's information as they worked.

MARK VAN DOREN

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FILMS

Unsettled Accounts

HOW to disturb an audience is of course as big a problem in the cinema as in the theater. Director Fritz Lang has been highly successful with the problem in his first American movie, made after more than a year of idleness in Hollywood. One might say too successful, for "Fury" (Capitol) is disturbing for the wrong reason: the problem it poses is entirely unresolved at the close. The audience is subjected to a high degree of strain during the cumulative course of the film, but one's emotions are unpurged at the end, for the catharsis is incomplete. Mr. Lang and his associates have disregarded an important corollary to disturbing an audience, that is, calming it by fulfilling its aroused expectations.

There is no misunderstanding the abhorrence with which the makers of "Fury" regard lynching. The directorial presentation of the good citizens of Strand, U.S.A., burning the jail from which they cannot snatch Joe Wilson is quite clear; to make it even clearer Mr. Lang later anatomizes every horrible detail of the mob in the newsreel shots used at the trial. But "Fury" is the story of Joe Wilson, and it is also clear that his vow, after his escape, to have the lynchers destroyed by the machinery of legal justice is a bitter and tragic one, for it means his self-destruction. At this point the film is already complete as tragedy. Joe Wilson has been changed from a sentimental and good-natured average man into an incurable victim of inhumanity; we await the resolution.

This is the meaning of lynching—not merely that human beings are capable of acting like beasts, but that the lives of two people we know, Joe and his girl, and the lives of twenty-two citizens are ruined by it. The story by Norman Krasna seemed to be a perfect invention for saying this. What are we to understand, then, when Joe Wilson enters the court just as the death sentences are being pronounced and saves his lynchers? That one man was capable of an act of perfect charity? But Wilson curses his lynchers in court and vows he'll never be the same again, although he has just performed the one act impossible to his altered character. What does "Fury" mean? Nobody's hurt; Joe and his girl are ready to marry and start life over, and the lynchers have had a big scare. The whole business is, I suppose, just one of those messes which human beings are always getting in and out of.

In directing the film Mr. Lang makes full and efficient use of his imagination only in presenting the mob and in creating small-town life. It is regrettable that he did not, or could not, make "Fury" the first-rate tragedy it might have been. Spencer Tracy as Wilson and Sylvia Sidney as the girl are handicapped by dull opening scenes, but their acting, particularly Miss Sidney's, improves as the film gains in intensity.

Alfred Hitchcock's long-awaited "Secret Agent" (Roxy) is another disappointment. As in "Fury" the situation is still unsettled at the end. The strain this time is a matter of mechanics rather than, as it should be, of suspense; the result is discomfiting rather than exhilarating. All the elements for an excellent spy film are there, including the dazzling trio of Madeleine Carrol, Peter Lorre, and John Gielgud; but the pace of the narrative is desperate, not easy, and the incontinent use of noise to emphasize emotion or situation, though it is in some cases effective, tends to become a substitute for emotion or situation itself.

ROBERT GIROUX

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Letters to the Editors

ARAB AND JEW

Dear Sirs: Why must *The Nation* accompany the splendidly objective article by Albert Viton, Why Arabs Kill Jews, in the issue of June 3 with an editorial comment that seems to ignore the facts presented by Mr. Viton? Mr. Viton stresses how incidental and relatively superficial is the Jewish problem in Palestine as compared with the more extensive Arab nationalist revolt, which is directed against all outside aggression, be it British, French, or Jewish. *The Nation,* however, sees fit to characterize this movement editorially as "the private war which the Arabs are waging against the Jews in Palestine."

But *The Nation's* remedy for the situation is even more amazing for a radical journal. In my opinion it here reaches a low-water mark in its record for consistency and liberalism. It suggests that the rise in Jewish immigration be maintained and that the British use force to subdue the Arab protests.

Is *The Nation* in favor of force to put down nationalist movements in Egypt, India, China, Puerto Rico, and Ethiopia? Why does the presence of Jews on the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean put *The Nation* in a position where it must condone the use of imperialist force? Would it not be better to reexamine the premises of Zionism than to commit oneself to such a policy?

SAMUEL HALPERIN

Brooklyn, N. Y., June 10

[If Mr. Halperin will reread the paragraph to which he takes exception he will find that it deals with the actual disorders in Palestine. There was neither space nor need to drag in a general discussion of the whole Arab nationalist movement; more especially since it was dealt with in Mr. Viton's article, to which we called our readers' attention. As for the sentence supposedly suggesting a remedy for the situation, we ruefully admit that it was open to that interpretation. Our intention was to predict, not to recommend. Our attitude toward nationalist movements is likely to be determined in each specific instance by the nature of the movement itself and the circumstances which condition its rise and development. We are certainly not opposed to the Arab revolt against foreign imperialism. On the other hand the situation in Palestine must be recognized for what it is. With some 375,000 Jews there who went in under British protection, the British government can hardly deny them protection now. Therefore it seems logical to predict that unless the Arab revolt can be settled peacefully, the British government will find itself unable to avoid the use of force.—EDITORS THE NATION.]

Dear Sirs: Your Palestine correspondent, Albert Viton, makes several incorrect and misleading statements in his article Why Arabs Kill Jews. He gives a completely distorted picture of the Zionist position, even going so far as to misquote the Zionist leader, Ben Gurion.

"The Arab nationalists point out . . . that they are losing their country," writes Mr. Viton, citing in confirmation of this "loss" the growth of the Jewish population since 1919 and the sale of land to Jews. He might in all fairness have mentioned that in the same period the Arab population increased by 28 per cent. He might also have pointed out that 50 per cent of the land acquired by Jews was uninhabitable marsh and desert which Jewish pioneers made habitable through drainage and irrigation. Furthermore, when occupied land is purchased, the tenant must be provided with funds in order that he may establish himself elsewhere on the land in Palestine.

Mr. Viton states that "the Federation of Jewish Labor makes keeping work from Arabs one of its chief aims." He should have explained that the struggle for "Jewish labor" in Palestine is the struggle against the Jewish plantation owner who employs cheap, unorganized Arab labor in preference to organized Jewish workers. There is no danger of the Jew displacing the Arab worker. Arab opportunities for employment have increased tremendously since Jewish colonization, but the competition of the cheaper Arab is a constant menace to the Jewish worker in the very industries and agricultural developments created by Jews. Ben Gurion, in his speech against Jewish capitalists who replace unionized Jewish workers with exploited Arabs frequently imported from outside Palestine, did not say, as Mr. Viton wrote, "Just as it is unthinkable for a Jew to open a house of prostitution in one of the Jewish villages, so unthinkable must it be for a Jew to employ Arabs." Ben Gurion really said, "To open a house of prostitution is a lesser disgrace than to deprive Jews of their labor on the soil of Palestine." (The Hebrew text of the speech appeared in *Haaretz* of March 10, 1932, and was reproduced in the Communist *Freiheit* of December 15, 1935.)

Mr. Viton also announces that only exceptional Jews want "peace and cooperation" with the Arabs, and that "every good Zionist sees the Arab as an unnecessary obstacle to his homeland dream." This statement is both vicious and irresponsible. Zionism is based on the belief, now borne out by experience, that with the introduction of modern methods of intensive agriculture Palestine can support a much larger population, Jewish and Arab, than it does at present. Jewish colonization is not only reclaiming a barren land but increasing its absorptive capacity. The growth of the Jewish population is accompanied by a steady increase of the Arab population as well as an improvement in its standard of living.

MARIE SYRKIN

New York, June 6

EDUCATE VERMONT!

Dear Sirs: I have been following your articles in *The Nation* concerning the Vermont marble strike with the greatest interest. I know many people in Rutland and my relatives live in Rutland. The damnable part about the whole frame-up is that the people in Vermont do not know the truth. Even friends I have talked with assume that everything is all settled and that the Proctors have been both fair and honorable in all their dealings with the "red element," as these good citizens insist the strikers are. The Rutland papers print only Proctor reports and propaganda, and with the state officials apparently in the pay of the Proctors a decent respect for rights, liberties, and our constitutional freedom is being dragged in the mud by Vermont. This is all the more ludicrous as these same good citizens are nearly all staunch old Republicans who are making a great hue and cry about preserving the Constitution.

I think it is possible to reach these good citizens and warn them. If each reader of *The Nation* would clip out your article in the issue of May 27 and mail it

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to his Vermont friends, asking them to read it and try to understand what is happening to freedom in Vermont, the force of united opinion might arouse them to a realization of the precipice toward which they are rushing.

STANLEY E. SAXTON

Saratoga Springs, N. Y., May 29

Dear Sirs: Replying to your favor of the fourteenth instant be assured I have been very much distressed at the Vermont Marble Company strike, but I believe that better conditions will come out of it. I believe that you have been somewhat misinformed. I sincerely hope and believe that happy conditions will be brought about.

CHARLES M. SMITH, Governor

Montpelier, Vt., May 28

HATS OFF TO MOTHER!

Dear Sirs: I have your communication requesting my stand on the question of removing hats in elevators. As you state, many people are confused on my position on the matter of hat-doffing. It seems that there have been conflicting newspaper reports, and I have also been accused of making conflicting statements.

You will understand that, on the one hand, I believe in progress; and, on the other hand, I also believe in observing our forefathers' customs. I believe that we should have the Wagner Labor Relations Act, the NRA, the AAA, and the Rural Resettlement, all of which are unconstitutional, and believe that we should do whatever it takes to get those acts. On the other hand, I revere our forefathers, especially those who wrote the Constitution, and also revere the fine old gentlemen who constitute the Supreme Court. I believe that something should be done. I believe that liberty is all right, but at the same time I do not believe that liberty is license. I believe that the spirit of optimism should prevail in this nation and that we should look forward to building a great nation in which to live and to bring up our children.

In reference to your question as to my definite position, I want you to know that I always will stand for Americanism, the fireside, and true beliefs. In this stand I do not believe that there is a man who will rise and oppose what I have had to say. Do you dare oppose a single thing that I say? Certainly not. I know you would not, because you are good Americans and you would not fly in the face of the home and a mother's heart.

MAURY MAVERICK

Washington, June 12

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN BROOKLYN

Dear Sirs: It should be of interest to your readers, especially those living in Brooklyn, that a low-tuition, progressive school is opening in Brooklyn in September, in response to a long-felt need for progressive education among families of moderate means. It will be known as the Community School and will be housed in a modern, completely fire-proof building, at 2059 Bedford Avenue.

Even the most ardent adherents of progressive education find it difficult to circumvent the criticism that classes in progressive schools are too small and therefore do not afford an adequate social experience to the children in them. Since the depression, small classes have been growing smaller. The smaller the classes, the more sheltered is the school environment and the more difficult is it to prepare the child for the social scene outside.

The only way to liberate progressive schools from this dilemma is to enlarge classes to a point midway between the average of progressive schools and public schools. Elizabeth Irwin, director of the Little Red School House in Manhattan, pointed the way eight years ago. Large classes will make possible lower tuition fees, and lower tuition fees will attract a more democratic and cosmopolitan school population. In our school, as in most good progressive schools, academic subjects will receive enough attention to prepare children for accredited high schools, and the curriculum will be enriched by many creative activities, such as arts, crafts, and dramatics. Children will receive individual attention but not at the expense of their social development.

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AUGUSTA ALPERT, Director

New York, June 1

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CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES RORTY, having uncovered the feet of clay of the advertising business in "Our Master's Voice," is now doing the same for medicine in a *Nation* series.

STUART CHASE has lately returned from the Tennessee Valley, where he obtained the material for his series of articles, concluded in this issue.

THE POETS whose work appears in this issue are all in their early twenties and were among the contributors to Ann Winslow's anthology of college verse, "Trial Balances," published last fall. Since then Muriel Rukeyser has won enthusiastic recognition from the critics for her book of verse "Theory of Flight"; Josephine Miles has been the recipient of the Shelley Memorial Award for poetry; and Clark Mills has been awarded the annual *College Verse* prize. Lack of space has limited our choice, but it is our belief that the poems we have selected are sufficiently representative to warrant their publication here in a group.

EDMUND WILSON, literary critic and commentator on American life, has recently published "Travels in Two Democracies," the democracies being America and Soviet Russia.

WILLIAM TROY, formerly film critic of *The Nation,* is now in the English Department of Bennington College.

VERA MICHELES DEAN, editor of the Foreign Policy Association's publications, has long been a student of European affairs.

BROADUS MITCHELL is associate professor of political economy at Johns Hopkins University and author of "A Preface to Economics."

R. P. BLACKMUR is a critic and poet whose verse has appeared frequently in the *Virginia Quarterly Review.* He is the author of a book of essays on contemporary literary figures entitled "Double Agent."

EVELINE BURNS is a member of the Economics Department of Columbia University and the author of "Toward Social Security."

GEORGES SCHREIBER, *The Nation's* Washington pictorial correspondent, went to Cleveland to do the drawings appearing in this issue. That special look in the Hoover portrait is due to the fact that coming home on the train Mr. Schreiber sat opposite the ex-President at breakfast.

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